

Soviet History:

Countering misperceptions and
promoting re-conceptions



An online journal by LeftistCritic

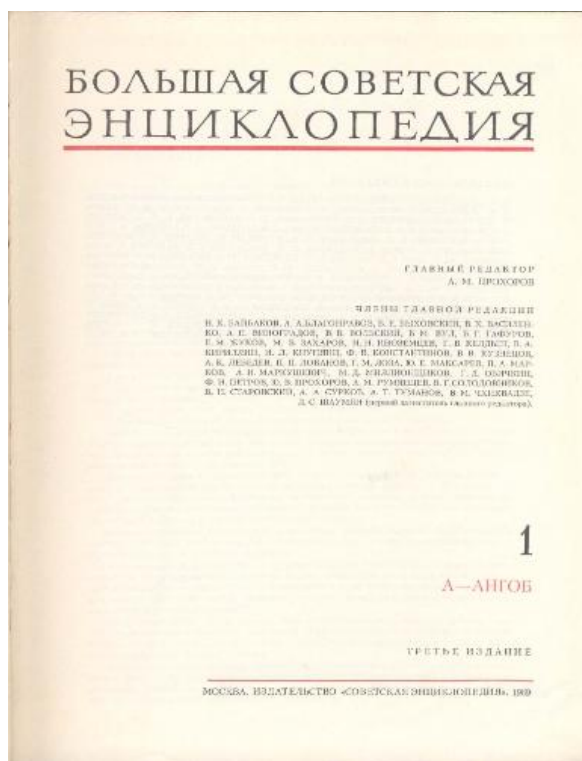
Editor's Note: Introducing *Soviet History*

Hello everybody. I thought that I might create this journal to accompany the new subreddit titled Soviet History. This journal is not specifically related with that group, but is partially in the same vein. This journal reprints accounts from myself, LeftistCritic, to counter wrongheaded notions about the Soviet Union in the West by liberals, those on the Left, and deluded Trotskyists, among many others. It definitely does not follow the narrative of [bourgeois scholarship](#) on the subject. This journal will be bi-monthly, or monthly as needed, as to not increase the strain on the person assembling the journal at the current time. It is possible that this journal will take submissions in the future, but for now it is just my own submissions and is published on the Internet Archive. Enjoy!

Best regards,
LeftistCritic

Annotating a section of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia

by *Leftist Critic*



Title page of the Third Edition of the Encyclopedia, published in 1969, courtesy of Wikimedia.

Table of contents for this article

- Preface (pages 1-2)
- The Pre-Colonial Era (p. 4-5)
- The Colonial Period and the American Revolution (p. 6-11)
- From the Revolution Through Reconstruction (p. 11-26)
- From Reconstruction to The First World War (p. 26-33)
- From the First World War to the Present (p. 33-59)

Preface

Earlier this year, I became aware of the section of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, called Bolshaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya in Russian, translated into English in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* when looking for translations of the Encyclopedia myself.¹ Despite this, only recently have I read through the whole translated version of this section. Most annoying of all are the comments by the numerous bourgeois historians as annotations to the text. In the version I printed out while at school, I crossed out the text of these footnotes as they act almost like the /r/badhistory subreddit which is anti-communist and insulting to a degree that is opposed to the purpose of revolutionary history. Using a partial transcript provided by Questia and using text from the downloaded PDF from JSTOR, this section of Great Soviet Encyclopedia is presented here free-of-charge and fulfilling the fair use requirements under United States copyright law. No historian can get everything right, but this section is no doubt better than that of most bourgeois historians.

Now, before showing the translated text, it is best to address the preface in the text presented in the 1959 article in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* by New Deal progressive, strong US nationalist, anti-communist, and Kennedy appointee Adlai Stevenson (1900-1965). In his preface, he declares that those in what he sees as “Communist world,” which apparently has 800 million people, have the concept of “America as a land of greed-ridden past, chaotic present, and dubious future” drilled into their heads which can “prove a deeper danger to the United States than Soviet missiles.” He goes on to say that this translation is vital, in his mind, so US citizens can learn about the “enemy,” specifically writing of history by the Soviets to devote themselves to revolutionary principles. Apparently that is “bad” since Western scholars are seen as impartial and having “suspended judgment” in his mind, since he almost scorns the idea that “all history is economic; all economics Marxian” and claims that the history is a “curiously dehumanized account of history in which a stereotyped pattern of impersonal force supplants individual effort.” If that’s not enough of his anti-communist dribble, apart from mentioning that the *Yale Review* apparently analyzed other sections of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, saying that he is “profoundly disturbed” what Soviets write about America, basically acting like they are brainwashed, going even further in saying that the history propagates “the post-Stalinist doctrine of coexistence” and being “strange.” He then thinks that Soviet scholars should publish bourgeois accounts of themselves, even though this makes no sense since they already see enough of that in the world at-large.

I actually found Stevenson’s argument highly hilarious, typical of the foreign policy establishment of the murderous US empire but something that should be countered. Any reasonable person that is on the side of revolution, justice, and against the monstrous capitalist system understands the importance of articles like this one. This article is an effort to rescue the Soviet Encyclopedia, this version published in early 1956 (during the first years of Nikita Khrushchev), from the clutches of bourgeois scholarship and turn into into something to weapon of revolution. The original translation in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* has been largely preserved. In order to counter the possibility of bourgeois distortions in the text and to make it fulfill its purpose, footnotes have been added in this translation, making it annotated, just like the original one in the bourgeois academic magazine in 1959. The best sources available have been used, with the footnotes largely following those in the original translation in an effort to counter distortions, poke at the bourgeois scholars, and improve the text. I do not agree with the viewpoints of all of the sources, with some of the authors hostile to the Soviet Union, but they do help tell the story of US history in a way that is fair and well-intentioned. Other additional footnotes have been added as needed. Additionally, this section of the

¹ The full source is: “A Soviet View of the American Past: An Annotated Translation of the Section on American History in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Vol. 43, No. 1, Autumn 1959, p. 2-55.

Soviet Encyclopedia, published for the first time in *Soviet History*, had been revised by: (1) spelling out names of world leaders mentioned in the text with full names, (2) removing certain symbols from the text, (3) removing unnecessary capitalization, (4) moving text in parentheses in the translated text to appropriate footnotes as to improve the flow of the text, (5) dispersing the photographs/graphics in the original text among this transcript along with additional graphics, (6) not putting the text in columns as it was in the text in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, and (7) adding appropriate pictures into the text in order to enrich it as needed. Other than this, the text has not been changed. In the end, a text such as this is a good starting point to counter horrid bourgeois writings about US history which allow the populace to buy into “founding myths” and other lies to support imperialism, forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism within current (and past) US policy, whitewash the exploitation of peoples of color within US history, and ignore the contributions of revolutionaries, whether deluded or not, to US history as a whole.

- *LeftistCritic*

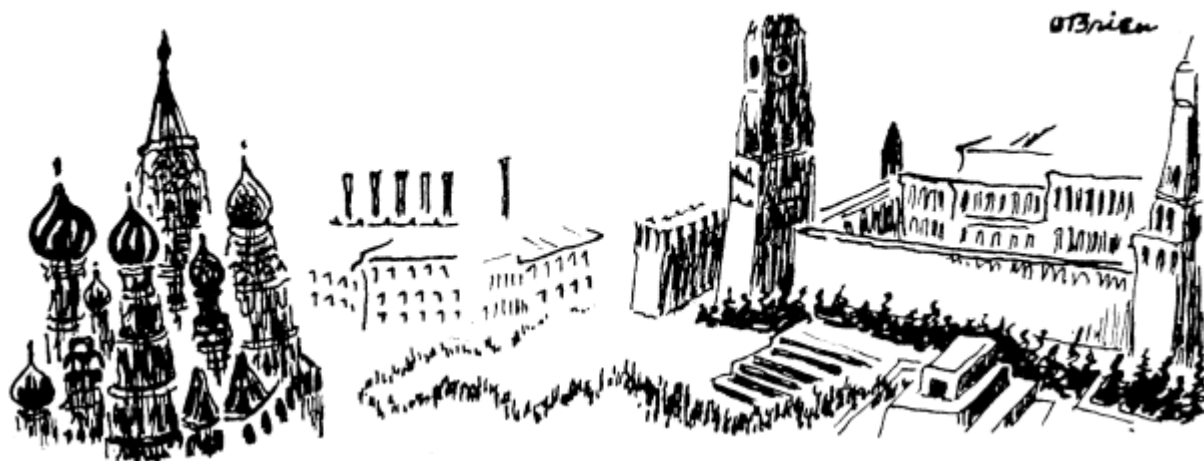


Illustration in the original encyclopedia of different aspects of Soviet culture. Artist's full name is unfortunately not known

The Pre-Colonial Era

The territory of the USA before European colonization was inhabited by Indians and Eskimos. The Indians belonged to an Americanoid race which derived from the Mongoloid. It is assumed that the ancestors of the Indians migrated to America from northeastern Asia, across the region of the Bering Straits, from ten to fifteen thousand years ago.² The Indians and Eskimos of North America were found in various levels of a primitive-communal order. The Eskimos inhabited the Arctic shore of North America from Alaska to Greenland. Their main occupation was hunting, on sea and on land. There are preserved in the social system of the Eskimos faint vestiges of the "generation" system of social order.³

² This is the general consensus of anthropologists as manifested in what has been called the “Clovis Theory” even as the exact migration route is in question. Some have proposed that peoples came to North America from Europe, across the tundra to Greenland and into the North American continent. This has been argued using radiocarbon dating at sites such as the Meadowcraft Rockshelter in Pennsylvania and Monte Verde in Chile.

³ The order of the Eskimos (with Inuits as [a more proper name](#) since Eskimo was a name imposed on them by European conquerors), who had lived in the northern part of the American continent since 750 BCE, was, by 1500, a nomadic. Inuits

On the western coast of North America, Indian tribes (Tlingit, Haida, and others) combined fishing with hunting. Social relationships were characterized by the presence of patriarchal dominance, of the development of barter, and of property inequality. In the Southwest the most developed were agricultural tribes called Pueblo Indians (K'eres, Hopi, Zuni, and others). They used irrigation in agriculture, built large communal houses, knew the art of pottery to a higher degree than the other Indians of the North American tribes, and carried on an active trade with neighboring tribes.⁴ By the time of European colonization, the Pueblo Indians were found in a state of transition towards a paternal generation.



A map that shows the differing migration routes into the Americas during the Ice Age

Nomadic tribes inhabited the prairie region, their main occupation having been the hunting of grassland animals, especially the bison. It is assumed that having settled in the prairie, these formerly agricultural tribes completely adapted their way of life to a nomadic form. Many prairie tribes had, simultaneously with a matriarchal line, the beginnings of a patriarchal generation. The prairie Indians formed a number of war alliances, of which the biggest and strongest was the family union of the Dakota tribes. Californian Indians were behind the other North American tribes in their level of development. They obtained a livelihood by gathering wild fruits, particularly acorns, which they cultivated by a rather complex method; in addition, they engaged in fishing and hunting. In the eastern part of the continent there lived agricultural tribes: Iroquois, Algonquins, Muskogy, and others. According to examples of tabulation by American historians, in the sixteenth century about one million Indians populated the territory of the United States.⁵

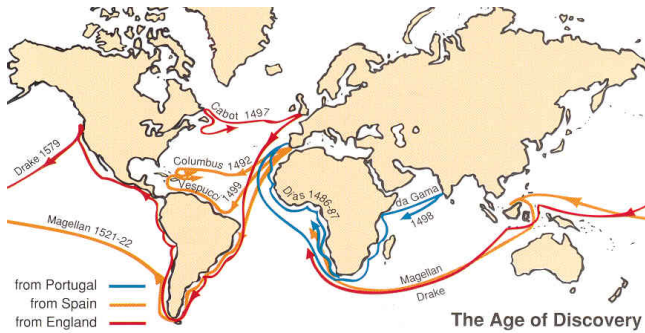
were a people who moved from season to season, and were hunters and gatherers, living in homes, that have been dubbed as “igloo” in English, in the winter, and different homes in the summer (*DK World History Atlas: Mapping the Human Journey*, *Concise Atlas of World History*, and Helen Dwyer and Michael Burgan’s *Inuit History and Culture*). Due to their transitory nature, they did not have permanent settlements or towns, with the men in a community making decisions after debating and coming to an agreement, with some regions the older or more monied men holding more sway, since they were no formal governments or politics as we know it today. Inuits were very spiritual, with construction of myths and shamans performing miracles, settling a dispute, or engaging in medical duties as needed. Regardless of this, there is no doubt that infighting and violence [increased](#) after European contact.

4 From 900 to 1200 A.D., farmers who were part of the Hokokam, living in parts of present-day Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico, constructing shallow pit houses near rivers to feed irrigation canals, planting maize, beans, and other canals as noted in a section of *Past Worlds: Atlas of Archeology* Other cultures that lived during the time of 700 to 1300 A.D. included the Anasazi and Mogollon cultures, with the Pecos and Hopi as descendants of the former, and the Zuni as descendants of the latter. Also, the Pima and Papago were descendants of the Hokokam. Without further research it is hard to say if the houses of “Pueblo Indians” (incl. Hopi, Zuni, K’eres, and others) were communal. Still conquistador Francisco Coronodo, who detested the Zuni, gives some insight [describing](#) the living situation of the indigenous Zuni as follows: “although they [the stone houses] are not decorated with turquoises, nor made of lime or good bricks, nevertheless they are very good houses, with three, four, and five stories, where there are very good apartments...and some very good rooms underground, paved, which are made for winter and have something like hot baths.”

5 Historians estimate that in 1492, 60 to 70 million indigenous populated the Western Hemisphere when Columbus arrived (Gary Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early North America*). The possibility of one million indigenous in the United States by the 1500s (Sixteenth Century) is likely an understatement.

The Colonial Period and the American Revolution

Colonial Period: 1607-1775



Map of expeditions around the world by Portuguese, Spanish, and English explorers

Shortly after the “discovery” of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492, English expeditions led by John Cabot discovered Newfoundland, the northeastern peninsula of America, and a large part of the eastern coast of North America, down to the 38°. ⁶ In the sixteenth century the colonization of North America was begun by Europeans. Spain, France, England, the Netherlands, and Sweden carried out the colonization. The Indians offered heroic resistance against the colonists, but the Europeans possessed a huge superiority in weapons; in addition to this, the Indian tribes were disunited and fought among themselves,

which also facilitated the conquest of North America by the Europeans. The process of colonization was attended by uninterrupted wars with the Indians, the first war in 1622-1634, the seizing of their land, driving them back to the West, and annihilating them. The first permanent English settlements were founded in the South in the territory of Virginia in 1607 and in the North in the territory of Massachusetts in 1620. Having established during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a series of colonies, the last in Georgia in 1733 and having seized the Dutch colony of New Netherlands as a result of the war with Holland in 1672-1674. ⁷ England spread its domain on the Atlantic Coast. As a result of the Seven Years' War, 1756-1763, England seized Canada and Eastern Louisiana, which had previously belonged to France. ⁸

In the eighteenth century the Russians explored and began to colonize Alaska. In the beginning of the nineteenth century Russian settlements sprang up in California. ⁹

The English colonies had the greatest development. In the thirteen English colonies founded in the territory of the USA, immigration was mainly from Great Britain and Ireland. Among the immigrants, destitute peasants and artisans predominated. A capitalistic structure began to develop in the colonies. The preference

⁶ As Nash writes, in *Red, White, and Black*, the voyages Cabot, who was actually named Giovanni Caboto, were never followed up by subsequent English explorers.

⁷ In 1659, Peter Cornelius Plockboy, [received a loan of 1,500 pounds](#) from the authorities of New Amsterdam, then a Dutch colony, for an economic association. However, the colony did not prosper, as it was soon “captured by the English and renamed New York, after the Duke of York, who subsequently ascended the throne as James II.”

⁸ The Seven Years War (1756-1763) not only transformed the East India Company “[from a commercial into a military and territorial power](#),” but it deprived France of most of its colonies on the American continent.

⁹ Over a period of 134 years (1733-1867), Russian explorers and scientists, serving the Russian empire, [encountered peoples in the northern part of the American continent](#), establishing Fort Ross in California, and meeting many communities that lived in the “North Pacific region” as they established what was called “Russian America” and later using indigenous expertise to serve the interests of the Russian-American Company’s fur trade. In their explorations for the Northern passage, a focus on the Far North was not a priority until the 1830s, but they were introduced to the Inupiat and other cultures on the Aleutian and Kodiak Islands, with a high regard for “skillful hunters and mariners” among the indigenous, which is why they seemed to lament the “inevitable cultural losses” which came as a result of Russian contact.

for a small-farm economy spread. For the colonies there were the typical availability of uncultivated land and the severe shortage of manual laborers. The colonists had the opportunity of acquiring sections of land and of establishing independent agricultural communities. Gradually there developed, in combination with the small-farm economy, a domestic industry. In the colonies of New England and in the central colonies in the second half of the seventeenth century capitalistic manufacturing began to develop.¹⁰ In land ownership there existed several feudalistic elements: the right of primogeniture and entail; in several colonies, for example, in New York, there existed large-scale land-ownership of a semi-feudal type --in which lands were worked by hereditary farmer-tenants paying a fixed rent. Smallscale farmers carried on a struggle against colonial authorities for land and political rights. There occurred many agitations and uprisings in Maryland in the period 1654- 1689; in Virginia, under the leadership of Nathaniel Bacon, in 1676; in Pennsylvania in 1763; in New York in 1766; the insurrection of the "Levelers"¹¹ in North Carolina from 1765 to 1766; and others. Uprisings of the artisans and of the petty urban bourgeoisie took place in Boston in 1689; in New York from 1689 to 1691.¹² In the popular movements the "white slaves" took an active part. These were "temporarily indentured servants," who served for four to seven years, including immigrants, persons convicted for vagrancy, for political reasons, as well as criminal offenders and colonists who were committed into slavery for unpaid debts.¹³

In the South the slavery of Negroes, first introduced into Virginia from Africa in the beginning of the seventeenth century by Dutch slave traders, was widespread. The slave labor of the Negroes served as a basis for the development in the southern colonies of a plantation economy, the principal crop of which was tobacco until the end of the eighteenth century, and after that cotton.¹⁴ The Negroes, subjected to cruel

10 Not only was the settler society [built on a foundation of conquest](#), but by the later 1600s, not fully supporting itself, was building up money from merchant trade and the beginning of tobacco plantations which would later be occupied by slave laborers rather than indentured servants.

11 In North Carolina, from 1768 to 1771, farmers had called themselves "regulators," a term used to describe the idea that people had the right to "regulate" those governments that were unresponsive to the condition of the populace, engaging in an uprising to address the ills of government benefiting the powerful and wealthy, courts benefiting land speculators, lawsuits for unpaid taxes and debts, scarcity of cash, and heavy specie taxes, led by people such as religious progressive Herman Husband, who later joined other revolutionary movements, engaging in a threat of armed force to act out, as Husband put it, God's will with a "Spirit of Enthusiasm...to redeem their country." Ultimately, while Husband was never charged with a crime by North Carolina courts, for leading the rebellion, it ended on May 19, 1771 when the governor's militia put down the two thousand "disorganized Regulators at the Alamance River" and Husband slipped out the state, later living his years in Maryland and then Western Pennsylvania (Terry Bouton, "William Findley, David Bradford, and the Pennsylvania Regulation of 1794" and Wythe Holt, "The New Jerusalem: Herman Husband's Egalitarian Alternative to the United States Constitution" both in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, edited by Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael).

12 The Boston rebellion [was undertaken by Puritan colonists](#), who overthrew the colony's governor, Sir Edmund Andros, for his religious tolerance and support of England's Anglican Church, saying they were "oppressed." The governor was imprisoned for almost a year, with the colonists reviving the old charter of the colony and pledged loyalty to the new British King who supported their rebellion. As for the rebellion in New York, also called [Leisler's Rebellion](#), was when an ardent protestant and prominent German merchant, [Jacob Leisler](#), led a revolt against English King James II after learning about the Glorious Revolution in 1688, and had expected good will from the new king, William or Orange, but was accused of unlawfully taking power and was executed. More than that, the rebellion's participants were mostly Dutch and according to a hostile account of the rebellion [by a gentleman in New York](#), said that "Leysler... in a Seditious manner stir[red] p the meanest sort of inhabitants...to rise in Arms," possibly in a fit of drunkenness, and that several "principal Magistrates, Officers and Gentlemen" were dragged into nasty jails by armed men allied with Leisler who quartered in the houses of those they had imprisoned, with a "pure zeal," in his view for "desperate fortune" rather than about the Protestant religion.

13 While the use of the term "white slaves" is problematic, the account of indentured servants is correct. Nash writes in *Red White, and Black* that such servants were impoverished immigrants who committed themselves "to serve a master for a specific period of time" before set free, but they gained very little pay and endured horrible conditions, especially in terms of disease in the Chesapeake Bay region, but later displaced with the rise of slave labor in the Americas.

exploitation and deprived of all rights, stirred up rebellions and sometimes joined together with the "white slaves" or the Indians.¹⁵

In the area of the economic development of the colonies, tensions grew between them and the mother country. The colonies' growing bourgeoisie competed successfully with English merchants in the fur trade with the Indians, in fishing, in shipbuilding, and in trade with the West Indies. England impeded the economic development of the colonies, trying to keep them as a source of raw materials and as a commodity market for her own industry. England especially hindered the commercial ties of the colonies with other countries. A law of 1750 prohibited construction in the colonies of blast furnaces, rolling mills, and iron foundries. However, despite this, industry in the colonies developed. The trade among the colonies grew, as well as their trade with the West Indies. especially during the Seven Years' War, 1756-1763. It was difficult for England in this period to counteract the economic development of the colonies. With the development of capitalism, the gradual decline of a single market, and the strengthening of economic ties among the colonies, the bourgeoisie of the North American people was formed.



Map of the battlefields of the Seven Years War

After the Seven Years' War, England undertook drastic measures in order to arrest the further economic development of the colonies. In 1763 a royal proclamation was issued prohibiting settlement of the land beyond the Allegheny Mountains. The campaign directed against contraband trade grew stronger. Trying to conceal from the colonial population the huge expenses incurred in the Seven Years' War, the mother country resorted to taxation of the colonies.¹⁶ In 1765 a stamp duty was levied, constituting the first attempt

14 The labor shortage created by European imperial expansion to the "New World" led to a vibrant African slave trade, which led to loss in population on the African continent, disruption of African economic activity, and exploitation of not only the people of Africa but its rich natural resources (Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* and Gary Nash, *Red, White, and Black*). As Nash notes, in the present-day United States, enslaved blacks began to be profitable for the English after 1663, with black Africans snatched and stolen from the African continent by the Royal African company, with cruelties on the Middle Passage, like other enslaved blacks, and it created a "slave-based agricultural economy in the South." Once enslaved laborers were in the US, they replaced the dwindling number of white servants from England and were a source of "cheap labor" for the southern planters, leading to "black codes" to control the movement of enslaved blacks, reducing them from humans to a "piece of chattel property" and laying the foundation for "white racial prejudice," or racism in the United States, which was further buttressed by the "mass enslavement of Africans" which continued until its official end in 1865 with the close of the civil war.

15 [According to Joseph Holloway](#), there had been multiracial rebellions (between whites and blacks) which were planned or occurred in 1663, 1782, 1793, 1796, 1802, 1812, 1816, and at other times, along with numerous rebellions or plants to rebel by enslaved blacks in 1687, 1688, 1690, 1691, 1708, 1709, 1710, 1711, 1712, 1713, 1720, 1722, 1723, 1728, 1730, 1732, 1737, 1738, 1739 (Stono Rebellion), 1740, 1741, 1748, 1751, 1755, and 1759.

16 The Seven Years War had drained the British treasury of funds, resulting in new taxes to pay for the British imperial debt, leading to opposition among the colonists.

at direct taxation of the colonists. In 1765 the mother country undertook an attempt to quarter English soldiers in the colonies.¹⁷

A significant role in the liberation movement against the mother country belonged to an organization



Print shows a "Virginian loyalist" being forced to sign a document by a club-wielding mob of "liberty men." Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

formed in 1765, "The Sons of Liberty," consisting of artisans, laborers, farmers, and merchants, and led mainly by radical representatives of the bourgeoisie. Meeting in New York the assembly of representatives of the colonies was of great importance in their unification. The Congress determined the boycotting of English commodities.¹⁸ A powerful popular movement forced England to retract the Stamp Tax in 1766,¹⁹ but the English Parliament at the same time confirmed the mother country's right to issue any laws in regard to the colonies. In 1767 taxes on the importation by the colonies of tea, glass, and paint were introduced.²⁰ In all the colonies the movement for the boycott of English commodities and the agitation for the development of local manufacture grew stronger. In 1770 the taxes on commodities were lifted, except for a small tax on tea. The quartering of English soldiers in the colonies led to a bloody clash between the colonies and the troops in Boston in 1770. In 1772 in Boston, and after that in other cities, Committees of Correspondence were founded, taking into their own hands the leadership in strengthening the national liberation struggle against the mother country. The leadership of the Committees of Correspondence belonged to the bourgeoisie, but representatives of the artisans, of the petty urban bourgeoisie, and of the farmers were also members of them.

In December 1773 the members of the organization "Sons of Liberty" threw into the sea a shipment to Boston of a load of tea belonging to the English West Indies Company in what was later called the Boston Tea Party.²¹ The English government launched repressions: in 1774 the Boston harbor was closed. New contingents of soldiers were directed to Boston, which was declared in a state of siege. These measures and the annexation to Canada through the Quebec Act of 1774 of the vast

17 The [Quartering Act of 1765](#) declared that since "publick houses and barracks...may not be sufficient to supply quarters for such forces" it means that "carriages and other conveniences" should be used for that purpose, including "uninhabited houses, outhouses, barns or other buildings." The law also said that officers and soldiers who are quartered and billeted "shall be received and furnished with diet, and small beer, cyder, or rum mixed with water, by the owners of the inns, livery stables, alehouses, victualling-houses, and other houses" along with saying that anyone who does not obey this law will be convicted before the appropriate magistrate.

18 The Stamp Act Congress which this text describes as a "meeting in New York" and "the Congress" was one of the first unified meetings in the English colonies. In their [Declaration of Rights](#), they argued in favor of local autonomy in the colonies but not against the rule of the English crown, as is important to note.

19 The main Stamp Act groups were composed of bourgeois professionals like Samuel Adams, and included Patrick Henry who reportedly denounced the Act (Ray Raphael, *Founding Myths: Stories That Hide Our Patriotic Past*). However, as Raphael notes, lower classes in Boston had other motivations, targeting the house of a rich merchant and Tory named Thomas Hutchinson, riots which Samuel Adams condemned, and burning an effigy of a tax collector at a different point, which Samuel Adams did not support.

20 These taxes were five acts in what historians have dubbed the "Townsend Acts," which roughly includes the Revenue Act of 1767, the Commissioner of Customs Act in 1767, and the Indemnity Act in 1767.

21 This refers to [the East India Company](#), which was described by Marx as an extension of the English government and the British empire. The story of the Boston Tea Party, which the sentence later refers to, mainly relies on a fabricated narrative to promote the image of Samuel Adams, but actually was a bunch of two hundred colonists dressed as Indians dumping 742 chests of tea, sitting on a ship in Griffin's Wharf into the harbor, worth 15,000 pounds, was an act of vandalism which was a protest against the monopoly on tea by the East India Company (Raphael, *Founding Myths*).

North American territory beyond the Alleghenies provoked a new upsurge of the revolutionary movement, including various strata of farmers rushing to settle in the rich western lands.²² In 1771, the First Continental Congress was organized, adopting the resolution on the boycott of English trade and on the necessity of resisting the repressions on the part of the English. The English king declaring the colonies rebellious, the colonies were subjected to a blockade.

The War for Independence 1775-1783

In 1775 the American people began the Revolutionary War for independence from England. In April, 1775, farmers defeated the English troops near Concord and Lexington. In March, 1776, American soldiers occupied Boston. On the Fourth of July, 1776, the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia adopted the draft by Thomas Jefferson of the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration being revolutionary in character, it proclaimed the formation of an independent state—the United States of America.

At the head of the army, formed from partisan detachments and the colonial militia, Congress as far back as 1775 had placed George Washington. In the first years of the war the English, having received substantial reinforcements from England, succeeded in winning a series of battles. English soldiers occupied New York in 1776 and Philadelphia in 1777. The turning point in the course of the war occurred after that, as American soldiers won the major victory of Saratoga in October 1777. After the serious defeat of Yorktown in October 1781, the main forces of the English surrendered to the Americans.



Print shows John Bull throwing up his arms in despair as the devil flies away with a map labeled "America."
Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

The international situation was favorable for the USA and was conducive to victory, being characterized by the intensification of the conflict between England and other European states. In 1778 a Franco-American military alliance was signed, which the activities of the USA's representative, Benjamin Franklin, helped to conclude. The French army and navy took part in the war against England. In 1779 Spain entered the war against England; in 1782, Holland.²³ Also important to the colonial victory was the position of Russia, on whose initiative, in the Declaration of 1780, a number of European states declared an "armed neutrality," directed against England. In 1783 the Versailles Peace Treaty was signed, by which England recognized the independence of the United States.²⁴

22 The Quebec Act of 1774 was passed by the British parliament, which not only gave French Canadians complete freedom in a religious manner, restored French version of civil law in Canada, but also extended the boundaries of Quebec to the Ohio River in the South and Mississippi River in the West. This law was vital in helping keep Canada on the side of the British crown during the American revolution.

23 Years before, in 1776, the declaration of independence of the new United States had [gained a warm audience in the Netherlands](#). In 1781, the Dutch became involved in the war, after years of negotiations with the Americans, and in 1782, as this text alludes to, the Dutch recognized the independence of the United States, and arguably entered the war with England this year, a war which ended the following year.

24 While it may be odd to call this the Versailles Peace Treaty, the official museum there says that the "definite peace treaty" [was signed there](#) on September 3, 1783. So, it is not wrong to call the Treaty by this name, as the transcript of the treaty by the National Archives [confirms](#) negotiations occurred there, however its usual name is the Treaty of Paris.

The War for Independence was a bourgeois revolution. Popular masses won the victory over England, playing a decisive role in the revolutionary war against England. The Negroes took an active part in the struggle against the English.²⁵ As a result of the War for Independence the American people freed themselves from the colonial oppression hampering the development of productive powers. Royal lands and a large part of the property belonging to the Loyalists were confiscated, slavery in the northern states was abolished, the Church was separated from the State, and suffrage was somewhat extended. Conditions for the rise in the northern USA of the capitalistic way of development in agriculture were created by the earlier elimination of the existing elements of feudalism in land ownership and by the nationalization in 1787 of lands in the West.²⁶ At the same time, under the influence of the industrial revolution in England and of the increasing demand for cotton by the English textile industry, in the South of the country a slaveholding economy was established. With the transition of the plantations to the growing of cotton, slavery—as Karl Marx pointed out—changed into a commercial system of exploitation. The southern USA became the source of raw materials for the English textile industry.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels rated highly the historical significance of the Revolutionary War for Independence in North America and emphasized that it exerted a great influence on the development of the struggle against the feudal-absolutist order in Europe. Vladimir I. Lenin considered the War for Independence one of the great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars.

From the Revolution Through Reconstruction

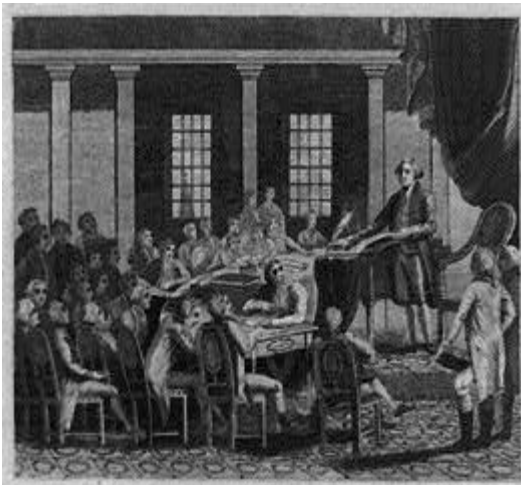
The economic and political development of the USA at the end of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries (to the beginning of the Civil War)

As a result of the War for Independence the bourgeoisie and the planters came into power in the country, turning the victory over England to their own class interests. Following the war the economic dislocation weighed heavily on the shoulders of the workers.²⁷ The intensification of the class struggle manifested itself in the postwar period in the agitations in the Army (1783) and the uprisings of the poorer farmers in 1786-1787 including in Western Pennsylvania, which has been dubbed “Shays’ Rebellion,” suppressed by armed strength.²⁸ The revolt of the farmers reinforced the aim of the bourgeoisie towards the consolidation of their dictatorship and the centralization of power for the suppression of popular mass resistance.

25 It is hard to say what “active” refers to, but there is evidence of numerous free blacks and some slaves fighting on the side of the Americans such as James Armistead serving as a spy, several serving as a minutemen at Lexington and Concord, and an enslaved black named Prince who rowed one of the boats across the Delaware River on Christmas night 1776 as part of the surprise attack in the Battle of Trenton, and a total of eight percent of those in the Continental Army’s ranks (Nash, *Red, White, and Black* and Raphael’s *A People’s History of American Revolution*). There is also evidence about enslaved blacks fighting on the side of the British, helped by Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation which created a short-lived Ethiopian regiment, along with others like [Colonel Tye](#), with thousands of such peoples fleeing to English territories as the war came to a close (Nash, *Red, White, and Black* and Raphael’s *A People’s History of American Revolution*). As Nash put it, “the American Revolution was the greatest slave rebellion in the long history of North American Slavery.”

26 The Northwest Ordinance in 1784 called for land west of the Mississippi, part of the newly christened “empire of liberty” to be divided into numerous states. In 1787, which this text refers to, was an act also passed by the Confederation Congress, to create the Northwest Territory, which established the precedent of a powerful central government.

27 The revolutionary war resulted in economic disruption and turmoil for workers, there is no doubt.



Convention at Philadelphia, 1787, on cover of a 1823 book. Courtesy of [the Library of Congress](#).

Put into effect in 1781, a constitution—"The Articles of Confederation"—formulating a union which preserved the sovereignty of the independent states, did not insure the unity of the country. The right of taxation remained with the states, and separate customs laws for each state were preserved, which impeded the development of a common national market. Representatives of the ruling classes at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 drew up a new federal constitution, consolidating the rule of the bourgeoisie and of the planters in the form of a bourgeois democracy.²⁹ Congress assumed the right of taxing and regulating trade among the states, and of the disposal by means of a nationalized reserve of the uncultivated lands in the West. More powers were given to the President. The Constitution sanctioned the existence of slavery in the South.³⁰ The Constitution, put into effect in 1789, displeased the workers. Part of the bourgeoisie and the planters also protested against it. Under the pressure of the development in the

country of a widespread movement, in 1791 the first ten amendments to the Constitution were added, confirming the bourgeois-democratic freedoms. These amendments received the name of the Bill of Rights.

In the process of a sharp political struggle in 1789-1791 in the USA, the bourgeois parties of the Federalists and the Republicans were formed. The Federalists voiced the interests of the large-scale mercantile bourgeoisie, the large landowners of the North, and part of the planters of the South.³¹ They advocated the strengthening of the power of the federal government. The Republicans, or Anti-Federalists, supporting the democratization of the Constitution, relied in that period on a bloc mixed in social composition, consisting of part of the bourgeoisie, small and medium-scale planters, farmers, and petty urban bourgeoisie. The Republicans were supporters of the preservation of States' rights.³² Unlike the Federalists, patterning their behavior after England, the Republicans came out in support of Revolutionary France.

28 Such rebellions of farmers included: one headed by local tavernkeeper Abonijah Mathews in Greenbrier County, Virginia (later West Virginia) in May 1787, which were focused against specific taxes, lawsuits over debt, and other issues; another dubbed "Shay's Rebellion" or more accurately the Massachusetts Regulation, over similar issues but aimed at the government of the state of Massachusetts, in the summer of 1786, which included leaders such as Daniel Shays and Job Shattuck (Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* and Gregory Nobles, "'Satan, Smith, Shattuck, and Shays': Leaders in the Massachusetts Regulation of 1786" in *Revolutionary Founders*, edited by Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael).

29 While some may shutter at this statement, it is not altogether controversial. There was division of the society into the rich and poor, creating a government to maintain peace and avoid disorder in order to protect economic interests of those crafting the Constitution (Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*). Other books that cover this more in-depth include Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* and William Hogeland's *Founding Finance*, among many other books on the subject.

30 While some will declaim that the Constitution does not mention the word slavery, they are forgetting that it is referred in [the 3/5 compromise](#), which made enslaved blacks in the South represent three-fifths of a person in order to give them political power, giving the government power to restrict the slave trade on an international scale ([until 1800](#) and later not until 1808) in Article 1, section 9, and saying that if slaves in one state escape to another they will not be freed by laws in another state within the United States, which is often called the [Fugitive Slave clause](#).

31 The strength of the Federalists, who were concentrated in cities such as Charleston, New York, Hartford, Philadelphia, Boston, and Providence, [was among "the manufacturing, financial, and commercial groups](#) of the population" who wanted to extend their "business operations" into new markets.

32 The Anti-Federalists, or who became the Republicans, [had their strength among "debt-burdened farmers"](#) who feared the wealthy elite, and planters/slaveowners who feared "the dominance of commercial and manufacturing interests" meaning that "the farming and planting South...presented an almost solid front against assumption, the bank, and the tariff."

The commander-in-chief of the Colonial Army during the War for Independence, George Washington, became the first President of the USA, from 1789 to 1797. In 1793 Washington declared the neutrality of the USA in the war of the coalition of European states against Revolutionary France. In 1794 the government concluded a treaty with England, degrading for the national sovereignty of the USA, the Jay Treaty, which stirred up widespread resentment in the country.³³ Opposition also sprang up in connection with the course of the government's domestic policy, which to a significant degree was formed by the adversary of democracy and leader of the Federalist Party, Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury in 1789-1795. The taxation policy of the government particularly provoked the farmers' resentment, which led to the revolt of the farmers of Pennsylvania in 1791, and ending in 1794, known in bourgeois literature by the name of the "Whiskey Rebellion" and to the agitations of the farmers of Pennsylvania in 1799.³⁴ The Federalist John Adams, President from 1797 to 1801, passed the law "against aliens," directed against revolutionary immigrants from France and Ireland, and the law "against sedition," threatening imprisonment for criticism of government actions.³⁵



John Jay burned in effigy in 1795.

Courtesy of the [US Supreme Court](#).

The relations of the USA with France became sharply strained. The policy of the government met with the opposition of the democratic classes, uniting with the Republicans.³⁶ This assured victory in the presidential elections for the leader of the Republicans, Thomas Jefferson, President, 1801- 1809). Jefferson's administration repealed the reactionary laws of 1798 and instituted a series of progressive reforms; in particular, an agrarian law was passed, in 1804, reducing the size of land sections for sale from government land reserves in the West to 160 acres, together with the lowering of selling prices and installment payments.³⁷ The agrarian policy of the Republicans contributed to the settlement of western lands by the

33 The Jay Treaty of 1794 gave indigenous people the right, as sovereign people to "[transport goods across the border free of duty](#)" but also failed to provide "adequately" for western farm interests by protecting "navigation on the Mississippi" leading to anger [from those elements](#), the mass of farmers, and planters of course.

34 The rebellion, which should be called the Pennsylvania Regulation of 1794, was the farmer [turning to politics](#) to fight for their own interests, led by diverging figures such as William Findley and David Bradford, was about, like the Regulations in 1786 and 1787, but united petty bourgeoisie and farmers against a federal government they saw as serving wealthy interests, represented by "moneyed men" and Alexander Hamilton who was seen as benefiting bankers, and betraying the ideals of the American Revolution (Terry Bouton, "William Findley, David Bradford, and the Pennsylvania Regulation of 1794" in *Revolutionary Founders*, edited by Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael). The result of the rebellion was the reinforcement of the power of the central government.

35 The Alien and Sedition Acts made advocacy of ideas a federal crime, laws that Paul Robeson [cited](#) when hauled before HUAC. The Alien Act gave the president the power to "expel from the country or to imprison any alien whom he regarded as "dangerous" or "had reasonable grounds to suspect" of "any treasonable or secret machinations against the government" whereas the Sedition Act penalized those who protested against the government or anyone who wrote, uttered, or published "false, scandalous, and malicious writing...against the government of the United States or either House of Congress, or the President of the United States, with intent to defame said government....or to bring them...into contempt or disrepute," a [bill rushed through Congress](#), even opposed by John Marshall and Alexander Hamilton.

36 According to "[Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2016](#)," from 1798 to 1800, the "undeclared naval contest with France" included actions including marines "in the Dominican Republic, city of Puerto Plata" capturing "a French privateer under the guns of the forts. Congress authorized military action through a series of statutes."

37 Jefferson, after his election in 1800, which was decided by the House of Representatives, allowed capitalism to expand, only trimming carefully the edges of the "Hamiltonian system" of finance including reducing expenditures such as

farmers. The acquisition in 1803 from France of western Louisiana for fifteen million dollars substantially extended the territory of the USA. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the USA and Russia in 1808-1809 contributed to the strengthening of the USA's international position.

England continued to remain the principal adversary of the USA in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Taking advantage of the USA's economic dependence on England and of its military weakness, the English bourgeoisie continued to seek reestablishment of its dominion in the former colonies in North America. In a violation of the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1783, England, during a long period did not withdraw her troops



"Perry's victory on Lake Erie," an illustration published after the war. Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

defeats. American troops attempted to invade the territory of Canada, but failed. In 1814 the English occupied the capital of the USA, Washington, and burned a large part of the city. Nevertheless, during the course of the war, the American Army and Navy, chiefly privateers, succeeded in delivering a series of blows to the English on land and sea. In January, 1815, by this time after the signing of a peace treaty, the Americans smashed the English troops near New Orleans.⁴¹ The USA remained in accord with the peace treaty concluded in Ghent in December, 1814, until the Border War.⁴² A result of the war was the strong independence of the USA. After the Anglo-American war, 1812-1814, the international status of the USA became stronger.

from the Northwest forts, and seized American merchant ships.³⁸ In response to these actions, the retaliatory embargo, in which the prohibition of trade with European countries and the closing of the ports of the USA to foreign ships, provoked resentment of the bourgeoisie, unwilling to lose trade profits. In 1809 the embargo was lifted by Jefferson, before the end of his term as President.³⁹ The relations between England, who still was not reconciled to the loss of her North American colonies, and the USA became still more strained. The English Navy continued to seize American ships.⁴⁰

In June, 1812, the USA declared war on England. In this war the American Army suffered a series of

removing excise duties, reduce the public debt, tried to limit the power of the federal judiciary with little effect, and widened the area for "agrarian expansion" with the Louisiana purchase, but he engaged in no attack on other "vital parts of the Hamiltonian system" such as speculation in public lands, democratizing mechanics of government or removing limitations on suffrage, leading to an anti-mercantilist policy, but not an anti-capitalist one (Richard Hofstadter, "Thomas Jefferson: The Aristocrat as Democrat," *The American Political Tradition And The Men Who Made It*).

38 There is no question that Britain left its posts from the Northern Frontier to keep their commercial monopoly and hold back Western expansion. Engaging in impressment was meant to not only fight Napoleon and his French forces but to maintain naval supremacy on the high seas.

39 The [Non-Intercourse Act](#) in March 1809 replaced the Embargo Act of 1807 lifted all embargoes on US shipping except those bound for the ports in France or Britain, which was meant to damage the economies of Britain and France, a measure which was not only ineffective like its predecessor but damaged the US economy.

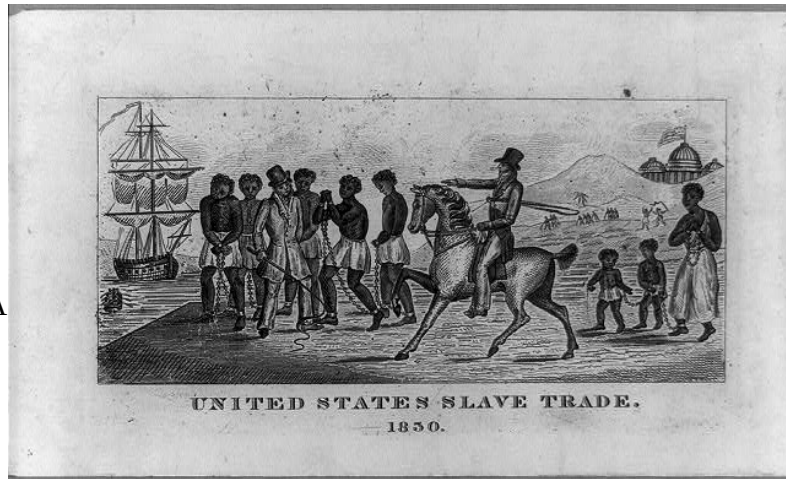
40 It is interesting that imperialist causes for the war such as the seizure of Canada, indigenous lands, and such are not mentioned here, but the text is not wrong that impressment continued even if it was exaggerated from US claims.

41 The victory by Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815 was mythologized into a great battle by his supporters, called a "brilliant victory" by James Monroe (John Latner, 1812: *War With America*).

42 The "Border War" is another name for Aroostock War or "Pork and Beans War" was an undeclared conflict over disputed territory [in the Aroostock River valley](#) between British regulars, Maine militia, and New Brunswick militia in 1839.

In 1819 the USA forced Spain to sell it Florida, which previous had been virtually seized by the USA.⁴³ In 1823 the President of the USA, James Monroe, proclaimed a doctrine which at that time was directed against the intervention of European States in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere; at the same time the expansionist tendencies of the USA in regard to the Latin American countries were reflected in it even then.

The availability in the USA of extensive lands and natural resources, the widespread immigration to the USA from Europe and the influx of foreign capital, as well as the weakness of the USA's neighbors, created, with the strengthening of the capitalistic attitude, favorable conditions for the swift development of the country. However, the USA remained in economic dependence on England. In view of the increasing demand for cotton as a result of the advances of the industrial revolution in England and of the industrial revolution in the Northeast of the USA beginning in the nineteenth century, the development of a plantation economy in the southern states, based on the widespread use of slave labor increased. The cotton was exported mainly to England, from whom industrial products were imported. The planters strove to seize the new lands in the West—a condition of the existence of slavery, as under a plantation economy the soil quickly becomes exhausted. Settlement of the lands in the West was accompanied by continuous wars with the Indians and attended by their extermination.⁴⁴



An abolitionist print, possibly in 1830, criticizes US involvement in the slave trade. Courtesy of [the Library of Congress](#).

The economic development of the USA went in two directions—industrial-agricultural in the North, and slave-owning in the South—which became the source of sharp social conflicts and was accompanied by a tense political struggle within the country. The bourgeoisie were in agreement with the planters. In 1820 there was some expansion in the area of slavery (to 36° 30'); at the same time slavery was prohibited in the territory north of 36° 30' (Missouri Compromise).⁴⁵ Fear of the power of the popular masses united the

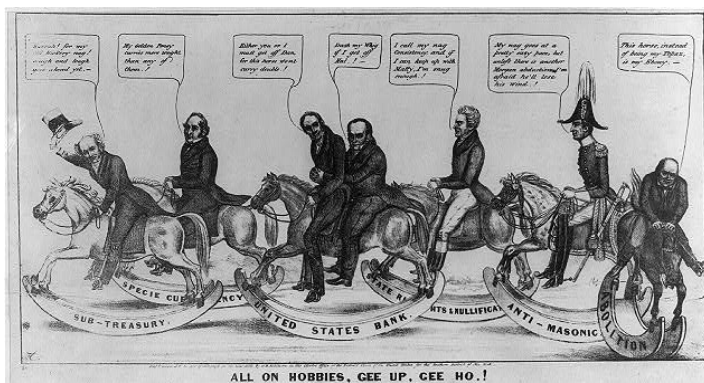
43 The description that it had been “virtually seized” by the United States is accurate. America was deeply determined to acquire Florida, even trying to rouse ruffians for an invasion in 1811, which was supported by James Madison, the latter of whom approved of a plan that those living in East and West Florida would stage coups and ask for U.S. annexation with the plot succeeding West Florida (Lester D. Langley, *America and the Americas: The United States in the Western Hemisphere* and Richard I. Immerman, *Empire for Liberty: A History of American Imperialism from Benjamin Franklin to Paul Wolfowitz*). As James G. Cusick notes in *The Other War of 1812*, in this war, there were plans to destroy Spanish power, with a pro-US rebellion in East Florida by five prominent inhabitants against the Spanish crown, and the US military, which invaded Florida was supported by prominent individuals like Henry Clay, William Crawford, and Madison’s advisers, taking advantage of the rebellion, with the Spanish seeing the invasion rightly as “a blatant act of aggression.”

44 With the British removed from the continent as a force to stop the tide of Western expansion, indigenous peoples suffered a horrible blow. Specifically, the war broke the “power of the American Indians and reinforced the powerful undercurrent of Anglophobia,” while promoting national self-confidence (Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict*)

45 The Missouri Compromise was an agreement that Maine would be a “free” state and Missouri a slave state, with other terms meaning that “the remainder of the vast Louisiana territory north of the parallel of 36° 30’ should be, like the old Northwest, forever free; [while the southern portion was left to slavery](#),” which could be said to be “an immense gain for liberty” since the “area dedicated to free farmers was many times greater than that left to the planters. The principle was once more asserted that Congress had full power to prevent slavery in the territories.” Still, it kept slavery in place.

planters and the bourgeoisie.⁴⁶ Several sections of the bourgeoisie were also closely connected economically with slavery.⁴⁷ This explained the policy of compromise on the part of the bourgeoisie, its indecision, and its inconsistency in the struggle against slavery. However, the compromises, not eliminating the conflict

between the Northern capitalists and the Southern slaveowners, were able only to postpone their inevitable clash.



An illustration in 1838 that satirizes major US political figures of the time. Courtesy of [the Library of Congress](#).

In the North industry developed comparatively quickly, and in the West, agriculture. By the end of the 1820's, the building of railroads began, which particularly encouraged the rapid development of the West. Settlement of the West extended the domestic market and hastened the development of industry. The industrial bourgeoisie was concerned with the protection of industry from foreign competition and sought the establishment of high protective tariffs on industrial goods. But the planters protested

against high tariffs. The farmers were also concerned with the repeal of high tariffs.⁴⁸ The Tariff of 1828, introduced in May 1828, during the administration of John Quincy Adams, President from 1825 to 1829, provoked especially fierce resentment.⁴⁹

A circumstance of the aggravation of the political conflict was the disintegration of the old Republican Party. A new political party sprang up. In 1828 the Democratic Party was formed, which united in the beginning period part of the planters, part of the bourgeoisie connected with the Southern slaveowners, and also a substantial part of the farmers. In 1834 the Whig Party was formed, representing the interests of the upper bourgeoisie.⁵⁰ In the presidential election of 1828, the candidate of the Democratic Party, Andrew Jackson, won, President from 1829 to 1837. Jackson pursued a policy of exterminating the Indians and became a supporter of slavery.⁵¹ At the same time, under pressure by the popular masses in the period of his presidency, several reforms were effected. White men in almost all the states were given the right of suffrage; the law of imprisonment for debts was revoked; and the existence of labor organizations, which until then had been prohibited, was permitted.⁵² Workers formed local parties in Philadelphia and New York from 1828 to 1829, and then in a number of other cities.⁵³ The workers' parties demanded free distribution

46 While abolishing slavery was a common answer to increase stability in the colonial system, "the settler bourgeoisie, however, which had immense capital tied up in slaves, [could hardly be expected to take such a step willingly](#)."

47 Still ultimately slavery became "[an obstacle](#) to both the continued growth of settler society and the interests of the Euro-American bourgeoisie," and led to increased hostility.

48 Not only did the Southern planters look upon "the protective tariff [as a tribute laid upon them](#) for the benefit of Northern industries" but ultimately those advocates of "a high protective tariff and the friends of free homesteads for farmers and workingmen mingled with enthusiastic foes of slavery" by the 1850s.

49 This tariff, also called the Tariff of Abominations, apparently was a "[rigorous protection](#)" which guaranteed "American producers against English competition" and it [served as an excuse](#) for secessionist moves by Southern states at the time, partially because it had negative effects on the Southern economy, leading to "fierce resentment" as the text says.

50 The Party, part of the capitalist class, accommodated slavery, and they "won" the Missouri compromise.

51 Many scholars have noted this, that Jackson was a despicable man. Howard Zinn described him as a "land speculator, merchant, slavetrader, and most aggressive enemy [of the indigenous] in early American history."

52 While these gains were a reality, there is no doubt that planters [became a power in the federal government](#), and some states, in the North, abolished slavery setting the stage for what was to come.

53 In 1827, after a strike of building tradespeople in Philadelphia, the first central labor union [was organized there](#), called the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations, and the next year, in May 1828, it became the first "labor political party in this

to all who wanted land; abolishment of debtors' prisons; the institution of democratic reforms; and the reduction of the working day to ten hours. However, these few weak workers' parties were disintegrating by the beginning of the 1830's.

In the beginning of the thirties in the USA a mass movement, abolitionism, developed widely, advocating the abolition of Negro Slavery.⁵⁴ The abolitionists developed an active propaganda against slavery. Their principal organ was the newspaper, *Liberator*, 1831-1865, of which the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison became the editor. By 1840 the members of the abolitionist societies numbered nearly 200,000.⁵⁵ One of the main factors in the struggle with slavery was the numerous uprisings and rallies of the Negroes, the most significant of which was the uprising under the leadership of Nat Turner in Virginia in 1831. The planters brutally suppressed the actions of the Negroes and prosecuted the abolitionists, resorting largely to the Lynch court.⁵⁶ With the 1840's, the political conflict in the country became even more intense. In 1840 the abolitionist "Party of Freedom" was formed.⁵⁷ In 1848 the popular farmers' party, the Free Soilers, which the labor organizations supported, was formed. The party stood for the prohibiting of the further extension of slavery in the territory of the USA, and against the expansion of the slaveholders.⁵⁸ In the forties the socialist movement, in which socialist-utopians predominated, grew stronger such as Owenists and Fourierites.



Card showing African American slave reaching freedom. Courtesy of [the Library of Congress](#).

The population of the North, especially where the wave of immigrants from Europe settled, increased more rapidly than in the South. By 1860 there were twenty-two million people in the North, in the South, according to approximate calculations, nine million, of which Negro slaves constituted about four million. However, the Democratic Party, changing in the forties to the party of the Southern planters and uniting with them part of the banking and merchant bourgeoisie, succeeded in encouraging abuse and demagoguery to keep power almost all the time until 1860.⁵⁹

country" with a decision to "function as a political organization was approved by vote of the constituent unions and other trade societies." Later on, this union lost its "ground as an economic factor, and at its last meeting in November, 1829, only four unions were represented" and it was killed "by politics." Beyond this, the labor press, in earnest "[seems to have begun](#) with the founding of the *Mechanics' Free Press* in Philadelphia in 1828 and the establishment of the *New York Workingman's Advocate* shortly afterward" with these papers, in later years, followed "by regular trade papers designed to weld together and advance the interests of particular crafts" and they, at that point, had limited circulation, but "wielded an enormous influence in the ranks of the workers."

54 Abolitionists, who saw it as their duty to break down slavery in established society, going beyond the push for manumission as a "solution" after 1831, at-large, seeing slaveowners as the enemy, organizing antislavery petitions, even as they were repressed by forces that did not approve of abolition (Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers: 1815-1860*)

55 This number of 200,000 relies on many sources, but more specifically, nearly 200,000 members were part of at least 2,000 abolitionist societies in the West and Northwest in 1840, compared with only 34 such societies six years earlier (Omar H. Ali, *In the Balance of Power: Independent Black Politics and Third-Party Movements in the United States*).

56 Nat Turner's rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1831, not only challenged the idea of slavery as benevolent but it was [a deeply religiously inspired and bloody rebellion](#) which led to a "culture of fear" among white southerners.

57 This refers to the Liberty Party, which had a strong abolitionist position, but worked within the electoral arena and believing that the Constitution was an anti-slavery document, while William Lloyd Garrison believed the opposition and took a much more hardline position.

58 This is accurate. The Party did oppose the expansion of slavery, part of the Wilmot Proviso, but it also was not "truly antislavery" as it did not "demand immediate emancipation" or touching slavery where it already existed, and depended on "an alliance of ardent racists and genuine racial egalitarians" (Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers: 1815-1860*).

59 The Democratic Party, owing much of its strength to Southern slaveowners, [was divided over the subject of slavery](#) at its 1860 presidential convention, causing much confusion.

Attempting to gain new lands, the slaveowners in 1836 worked for the secession of Texas, where slavery began to be extended, from Mexico. In 1845 Texas was annexed to the USA by a one-sided act.⁶⁰ As a result of the Mexican War in 1846-1848, the USA, under the peace treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, took almost half of all the territory of Mexico. According to the treaty of 1853, called the "Gadsden Treaty" for the name signed to the treaty the USA sent to Mexico, the USA cut off still more from Mexico about 140 square kilometers of territory.⁶¹ As a result of the settlement of a dispute with England, in 1846, the USA seized part of the territory of Oregon.⁶² The USA tried to buy or seize the island of Cuba, which belonged to Spain. It tried to impose its influence on Nicaragua and other countries of Central America. In 1850 the USA concluded an agreement with England on the question of control over the future canal across the territory of Central America, also called the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850.⁶³ In the forties the expansion of the USA spread to China. In 1844 the USA pressed an unjust treaty on China in Wanghia. The USA participated in the suppression of a popular uprising in Taiping, 1851-1864.⁶⁴ Threatening with armed force, it compelled Japan in 1854 to conclude an unjust treaty.⁶⁵ In 1858 the USA forced China to sign a one-sided agreement.⁶⁶ The interests of the slaveowners and part of the bourgeoisie coincided in expansionist foreign policy, but several groups of the bourgeoisie, concerned with the restriction of slavery, protested against the seizure of Texas, against the war with Mexico, and against interference in the affairs of Central America.

60 To leaders in the South, annexing Texas (and later conquering half of Mexico) [meant a renewed sense of security](#) "against the increasing wealth and population of the North" since Texas "could be divided into four slave states" and possibilities of more slave states, meaning that Southerners saw "slavery and King Cotton triumphant," secure for the time being, leading moderate opponents of slavery and abolitionists to despair, saying that slavery was more secure than ever.

61 This treaty, often called the "Gadsden Purchase" was when Mexico was paid \$15 million for the Mesilla Valley area in 1853, an area for which was undertaken with the idea of promoting agrarian interests, which was opposed by monied men, manufacturers, and merchants in the North.

62 The seizure of Oregon [was advocated by the Democratic Party](#), which would reverse an agreement in 1818 for the United Kingdom and United States to "occupy the territory jointly" and reinforce the desires of farmers in the East, a desire fulfilled with the British government, after pushed by the Americans acquiesced most of the territory to the United States, with a treaty easily passing the Senate with almost no opposition.

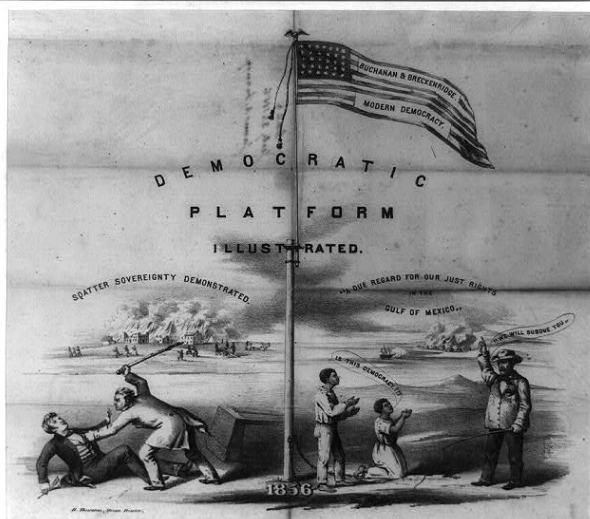
63 After the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, an American firm [gained priority](#) in building the canal through Nicaragua. The Treaty had proposed that this canal would be built by the British and Americans together, but this [was changed after 1900](#) when the imperialistic ambitions took even more of a role in US foreign policy.

64 The United States [forced China](#) to sign the Treaty of Wanghia which [was the first treaty](#) signed between China and the United States, compelling "China to accept American missionary activity, in addition to imposing such terms as the opening of five ports for trade" and was the beginning of a long period when "U.S. imperialism laid greater stress than other imperialist countries on activities in the sphere of spiritual aggression, extending from religious to "philanthropic" and cultural undertakings." The Taiping Rebellion, [as Marx describes it](#), was a rebellion (1850-1864) which "attacked the status quo Confucianist Manchu Dynasty" since it was based on "social revolutionary ideas of equality and was popular among the masses" since it not only "abolished private property [and] established sexual equality" but it "banned drugs (from alcohol to opium)," dominating much of Southeast China, and it would not be "until 1864 that the Taiping capital of Nanking was captured by the imperial Manchu government." [Some documents](#) show US interventions in 1854 and 1856 to protect US interests in China, but this does not count as helping in suppression. There is evidence that the US navy [helped](#) British forces withdrawing from China, and that after the rebellion there was a surge of immigration to the United States.

65 In 1853, Commodore Matthew C. Perry knocked down Japan's gates by [coercing](#) or [demanding](#) the Japanese to American capitalism, finding the country in a state of feudalism. The Japanese [accepted this](#), opening their "[barred door](#)" which helped [US shipping interests](#) of course, and the Treaty (or Convention) of Kanagawa was signed between the United States and Japan on March 31, 1854, as part of a plan to "open" up Japan, ending Japan's "two-century-old policy of self-imposed isolation," with US gaining two of the objectives it desired: "getting two coaling ports for the Navy's new steamships and in protecting America's oil workers (the whalers)" but Japan was not opened for trade until 1858 when the US counsel established a "commercial treaty" as [noted by the National Archives](#).

66 The Treaty of Tientsin [recognized](#) occupation of Vietnam by the French and permitted their forces of aggression to penetrate southern China" and increased "[China's semi-colonial status](#)" with more ports open to foreign residence and trade from as the US, Britain, France, and Russia, allowing "free movement and business anywhere in the country."

In the middle of the nineteenth century, slavery hampered even more the development of productive strength in the country and the growth of industry. However, the clashes between the bourgeoisie and the slaveowners usually ended in a compromise. After a long debate in Congress in 1850, California was admitted into the Union as a non-slaveholding state. But as a result of the agreement of the bourgeoisie with



Cartoon attacking 1856 Democratic platform as pro-South and proslavery. Courtesy of [Library of Congress](#).
government supported the slaveowners.

the slaveowners, who were taking advantage of their predominant influence in the government and Congress of the USA, Congress in 1850 passed a law concerning fugitive slaves, under which the authorities in the Northern states were obliged to catch the runaway slaves.⁶⁷ In 1854 the planters succeeded in passing the Kansas-Nebraska Act, in accordance with which the question of slavery in the territories was to be decided by the settlers themselves.⁶⁸ By these decisions the border agreed on between the free and the slaveholding states, established in 1820 at 36° 30', was erased. In the interests of the slaveowners, the Supreme Court of the USA in 1857 handed down a decision on the matter of the Negro, Dred Scott, ruling that slavery could exist in any state.⁶⁹ All of these measures brought about an intensification of the abolitionist movement. In 1854-1856 the clashes between the farmers and the slaveowners who had settled in Kansas broke out into an armed struggle. In this conflict the

In 1854 the bourgeois Republican Party was formed. The Free Soilers came into it, constituting its left, radical-democratic wing. The farmers and workers supported the party's left wing. The right, moderate-liberal wing of the party consisted of representatives of part of the mainly industrial bourgeoisie, concerned with the development of a domestic market and with trying to restrict the extension of slavery.

As a result of the economic crisis of 1857 and following that, an extended depression, the condition of the farmers and workers became worse. In the fifties the workers' movement became even more organized: the number of strikes increased; trade unions grew. Gradually the workers were drawn into the political conflict. The struggle of the workers merged with the struggle of the farmers for land and against slavery.⁷⁰ A radical current grew stronger among the abolitionists. The Negroes took an active part in the struggle against slavery. Frederick Douglass, an eminent representative of the Negro people and an important figure of the American revolutionary movement, played a prominent role in the fight for the freedom of the Negroes.⁷¹ By means of a "secret railroad" having its own stations, the homes of citizens,

67 This act was a compromise between the North and South, but it could not prevent "slaves from coming, and the revolutionaries in the North from assisting them" as [C.L.R. James noted](#).

68 The Kansas-Nebraska Act opened the door to slaveowning in the Kansas territory and led to open revolts on the frontier.

69 The Dred Scott case not only pushed the nation to sectional conflict, with Dred Scott himself as a "man without a past," with horrid chief justice Rodger Taney writing one of the nine decisions, with the court concluding that Dred Scott was still a slave, and that, as Taney, put it, Scott was not a citizen and approved of the extension of slavery to more territories within the United States (Peter Irons, *A People's History of the Supreme Court*).

70 This merging of struggles is entirely possible. As Noel Ignatiev wrote in *How the Irish Became White*, working-class Irish folks were broadly anti-slavery in the 1840s, connecting with slavery in Ireland, while more and more changed their minds as they worked to assimilate themselves into whiteness.

71 Douglass, a renowned anti-slavery leader, a [political strategist](#) against slavery, urged Negroes to join unions, and [openly called](#) for slave insurrection in the South in 1849.

sympathizing with the fugitives), Negro slaves, fleeing from the Southern states got over into the North, usually to Canada.⁷² The armed revolt led by John Brown which occurred in 1859 was suppressed, but it became a stimulus for strengthening the struggle of the Negro slaves and the workers and the farmers against slavery. The dissatisfaction of the popular masses—of the Negroes and of the poor white population of the South—grew even stronger.⁷³ The presidential elections of 1860 took on the character of a keen battle for power. The planters tried to surmount a crisis of the plantation economy by taking new lands and by the forced diffusion of slavery in the whole territory of the USA.⁷⁴ For this they sought, at any price, to keep federal power in their hands. After the presidential elections, in which the candidate of the Republican Party, Abraham Lincoln won, President from 1861 to 1865, the slaveowners, long preparing revolt, reached a decision on the secession of the Southern states. In February, 1861, the creation of a slaveholding confederacy was announced. The slavery of Negroes was declared to be their “natural condition.”⁷⁵

The Civil War in the USA and the Reconstruction of the South

In April 1861, the Civil War, began. The governments of England and France actively helped the rebels, supplied them with weapons, and endeavored to organize intervention.⁷⁶ Also at that time Russia, declining an Anglo-French proposal to intervene in the Civil War on the side of the rebels, took up a position favorable for the Lincoln Administration. The arrival in the USA in 1863 of two Russian naval squadrons, combined with the aggravation of Anglo-Russian antagonisms, helped strengthen the international position of the Lincoln Administration.⁷⁷ Part of the bourgeoisie of the North followed an indecisive policy and did not wish to wage the war with revolutionary methods.⁷⁸ The North was not prepared for war. All this was the reason for Northern losses in the first period of the war, from 1861 to 1862 and for the prolongation of it for four years, despite the North's enormous superiority in strength over the South.

72 This is a reference to the Underground Railroad. This was the secret transportation of enslaved blacks to freedom. There is evidence that Harriet Tubman, one of the leaders (a “conductor”) in liberating hundreds of enslaved souls carried a musket, pistol, or rifle to defend herself in case they were attacked by slavecatchers, a practice which other enslaved black women also practiced. There were also the presence of numerous black militia groups in the Northern states before the civil war, some of which protected enslaved fugitives, part of black armed self-defense, connected to the approx. “250 planned insurrections on North American soil from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century” according to Herbert Aptheker.

73 John Brown, a white man, led a failed revolt of enslaved blacks. The dissatisfaction of white and black inhabitants was not a surprise considering the circumstances of the time.

74 Taking new lands and reinforcing the slave economy led to new tensions in the United States.

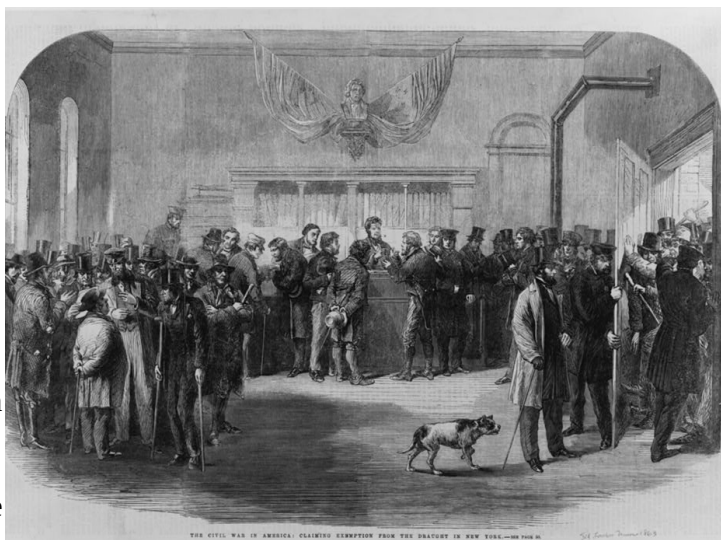
75 At this point, the Civil War, as it is commonly known, begun. Eventually over 600,000 souls would perish because of it.

76 During the Civil War, as [Marx and Engels noted](#), the English cotton trade was negatively effected and the “true people of England, of France, of Germany, or Europe, consider the cause of the United States as their own cause...the soil of the United States...as their land of promise, now to be defended...from the sordid grasp of the slaveholder.” They also noted the support that the Confederacy had among some English aristocrats, with a [push for a war](#) between the United States and England. The British neutrality [was thrown into question](#) with the Trent Affair and Alabama Affair, but active support of the Confederacy was never engaged in as a policy, instead just wanting [to defend their empire](#) without active involvement, [not engaging](#) in a proposed invasion of the United States even as 50,000 English people went to the United States to [participate](#) in some way, in the Civil War. The French were also [officially neutral](#) but has sympathies for the Confederates which was they they invaded Mexico (in part) in 1864, in hopes of helping the Confederates.

77 As the US State Department [argued](#), from 1861 to 1865, the Russians “assumed an official position that supported the Union while urging reunification” and negotiations to end the war, but in 1863, Russian naval ships sailed to New York city not only to demonstrate Russia’s “naval capability and its growing support for the North” along with preventing a possible war with Britain, a move which was a success and [saved the union](#). This perspective is also noted in *Russian-American Dialogue on Cultural Relations, 1776-1914* and *Russo-American Relations During the American Civil War*.

78 Specifically, [Marx and Engels “saw](#) the revolutionary implications of the struggle, the need to wage a revolutionary war, to arm the Negroes and to abolish slavery” and Marx said that there were “basic features which were in favour of the North, and which would drive them to “make war seriously and adopt revolutionary methods” and saying that the war of “this kind must be conducted on revolutionary lines, while the Yankees have so far been trying to conduct it constitutionally.”

Broad masses of workers and farmers, standing against slavery and for democracy and the preservation of the union of the country, were the main force opposing the rebels.⁷⁹ After a series of Northern defeats, the Lincoln Administration, under pressure by the popular masses and the radical-democratic wing of the Republican Party, introduce a series of measures bringing about the turning point in the course of the war. In May, 1862, a compulsory draft was announced.⁸⁰ At the same time, a law was passed concerning land allotments, according to which every citizen of the USA, or any person arriving in the USA and announcing his desire to adopt American citizenship, by paying a small registration fee could obtain for use a section of land of 160 acres, the Homestead Act. A purge of traitors in the army and in the state machinery was carried out.⁸¹ In 1864, General Ulysses S. Grant, who showed great military skill, became commander-in-chief of the Northern armies. On January 1, 1863, an act was put into effect concerning the emancipation, without land, of the Negro slaves belonging to the planters-participants in the rebellion.⁸² Almost 190,000 former slaves poured into the Union Army from the area of the South occupied by the North.⁸³ Negroes, participating in the struggle with the slaveowners not only on the front but also in the rear of the rebel lines, played a prominent role in achieving the victory. The Negro people made a decisive contribution in the matter of their own liberation in the struggle against the slaveowners. The transition to revolutionary methods of waging war in the second period of the Civil War (1863-1865) insured the complete defeat of the rebels. The victory of the North encouraged the struggle of the workers of the European countries, beginning with the English proletariat, who were protesting against the schemes of Anglo-French intervention.⁸⁴ Marx and Engels carried on an active fight against the threat of intervention.⁸⁵ European revolutionaries took a large part in the war of the North against the slaveowners.



1863 illustration shows men in New York seeking to be exempted from the draft. Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

79 It seemed that except for certain points in 1863, industrial workers in the United States didn't assert themselves as a powerful factor in revolutionary struggle but that small farmers, enslaved blacks, and Northern wage workers pushed for extermination of the mighty "slave power" in the South.

80 The same year that the Confederacy [introduced a conscription law](#), the Militia Act of 1862 was passed by the US Congress, [authorizing blacks](#) to serve in the Union Army, and followed by the Enrollment Act or Civil War Military Draft Act in 1863 which engendered civil unrest in the North against this conscription (and draft) in cities such as New York.

81 It is hard to know what this refers to, but there is no doubt that in March 1864, Ulysses S. Grant was appointed lieutenant general, controlling the whole of the Union Army, along with reorganization of the Army of the Potomac [that year](#).

82 This monumental landmark was greeted by black peoples [with great enthusiasm](#) as it abolished slavery in remaining slave states that were part of the Confederacy but not the Union and a tactic to defeat the confederacy.

83 This number refers to the "[almost 190,000](#)" (close to [the 198,000](#) estimated by the National Archives) blacks who served in the Union Army and Union Navy during the Civil War (*Why the Confederacy Lost*, *The Slave Trade*, *Americans: A Collision of Histories* and *The U.S. Army*, among other sources).

84 There is no doubt that the English working class took a position against slavery during the war, meaning that revolutionary socialists (and the working class) were one of the groups [that won](#) as a result of the war.

85 Marx and Engels's role is evident in their letters, articles, and other publications about the war. Some, such as bourgeois writer, John Nichols, argued that Marx had a profound influence on Lincoln (*The S Word*) but this cannot be proven.

The Civil War in the USA, ending in the victory of the North, had, especially in its second stage, from 1863-1865, the character of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Peoples' masses carried on a just war

against slavery. Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasized the enormous progressive significance of the Northern fight. Lenin later noted the progressive and revolutionary character of the Civil War.⁸⁶



Print shows a grand allegory of the reconciliation of North and South through the federal program of Reconstruction. Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

The Civil War led to the realization of a series of bourgeois-democratic reforms, creating favorable conditions for the development of capitalism in the country.⁸⁷ Conditions were created for the later transformation of the USA to a centralized, unified state. The American way of the development of capitalism prevailed in agriculture. Democratic solutions to the questions of lands in the West and of the freeing of the slaves promoted the expansion of a domestic market.

of the Reconstruction of the South, from 1865 to 1877, influential circles of the bourgeoisie, whose interests were voiced by Andrew Johnson, President of the USA in 1865-1869, feared the intensification and deepening of the revolutionary movement, and pursued a conciliatory policy in regard to the planters.⁸⁸ This gave the planters, who were trying to preserve the half-slave position of the Negroes and to keep them from political activity, the opportunity in 1865-1866 to put into effect the anti-Negro "Black codes," and to form terrorist organizations—the Ku Klux Klan and others.⁸⁹ Freed from slavery but having received no land, the Negroes found themselves in a half-slave economic dependence on the planters; they were forced to become tenant farmers. The planters, consolidating their position in the South, began anew to enter a claim on the leadership in the government of the country.

The defeat of the Southern slaveowners brought before the bourgeoisie of the North the problems of political and economic reconstruction of the South. In the period

86 Lenin [wrote in 1918](#) that the Civil War (at least from 1863 to 1865) had "immense, world-historic, progressive and revolutionary significance" and that "the representatives of the bourgeoisie understand that for the sake of overthrowing Negro slavery, of overthrowing the rule of the slaveowners, it was worth letting the country go through long years of civil war, through the abysmal ruin, destruction and terror that accompany every war."

87 After the Civil War (and later the Reconstruction), big capitalists, or "robber-barons" as they were called, saw no need to fundamentally change American society, meaning that times for transforming capitalism had ended. Such "reforms" included the Marill Tariff, Homestead Act, Pacific Railroad Act, and National Banking System, among numerous others as the West continued to be "[developed](#)" by settlers.

88 Johnson was afraid to disturb the order of the Old South by giving more benefits to free blacks, so he drew back from measures which would have helped better the Southern masses and pushed for ex-confederate planters to continue in hopes of the Union's speedy reconciliation" but this led to a series of new "black codes."

89 The first "black codes," first enacted by the states of Mississippi and South Carolina in late 1865, required blacks to have evidence of employment for the following year and if they left before their contract was up ("vagrancy"), then any white person could arrest them, limiting the opportunities of freedmen (Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*). Later codes also criminalized "vagrancy," even as they were supposedly "color-blind, along with limiting rights to hunt, fish, engage in free grazing of livestock by free blacks, with some states making it illegal for blacks to own weapons. Such measures incensed the Radical Republicans in Congress, leading them to push for laws to improve the condition of blacks in the South. White terrorist organizations in the South other than the KKK, specifically murdering black Union Army veterans, were also secret "[planter para-military groups](#)," the names of which included the White Caps, White Cross, and White Legion, engaging in bloody killings of black peoples "in town after town county and parish one after another, then in state after state" in order to break the back of Reconstruction.

Radical Republicans, who had represented the interests of the revolutionary groups of the bourgeoisie, advocated the execution in the South of bourgeois-democratic reforms. Under the initiative of Radical Republicans, Congress passed the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution, which were put into effect in 1865, 1868, and 1870 respectively, which made official through legislative channels the abolition of Negro slavery and granted them civil and political rights.⁹⁰

Having received a majority in Congress, the Radical Republicans, led by Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens, carried out, over President Johnson's veto, laws for the "Reconstruction of the South." The most important of these was the First Reconstruction Act passed on March 2, 1867. According to this law the Southern states were divided into military districts, a military dictatorship was introduced into the South, and former participants in the rebellion, trying to restore slavery and openly opposing the ratified amendments to the Constitution, were deprived of political rights.⁹¹



"Visit of the Ku Klux," an illustration in 1872 showing racist terror is around every corner. Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

The events of the Reconstruction period were revolutionary in character. In the period of the Reconstruction of the South, Negroes and poor whites took a most active part in the political life and, in particular, in the affairs of the newly created administrations of the Southern states, called the Reconstruction administrations; for the first time in the history of the USA several Negro representatives were elected to Congress.⁹² This had great progressive significance. Negroes organized the so-called Union Leagues, in which detachments of Negro militia and Negro rifle clubs were formed.⁹³ These leagues, becoming

90 The Thirteenth amendment abolished slavery except as a punishment for a crime (used as a basis for prison slavery later on), the Fourteenth amendment extended equal protection under the law to all citizens regardless of the state they live in, giving all people over age 21 the right to vote, among other aspects, and the Fifteenth Amendment said that newly freed blacks could vote in elections.

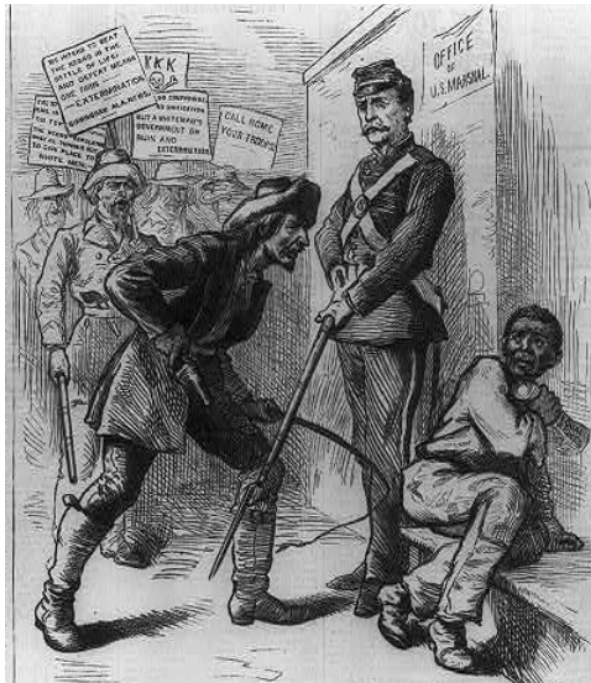
91 In its final form, the Reconstruction Act of 1867 divided the American South, except for Tennessee, into "five military districts under commanders empowered to employ the army to protect life and property" and laid out steps by which new state governments in the South could be "created and recognized by Congress" which included writing a new constitution providing for manhood suffrage and ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, but it did not make any economic provision for free blacks, even as it was "a stunning and unprecedented experience in interracial democracy," inspiring blacks to engage in political action on their own behalf (Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*).

92 Some say that the reconstruction came in three stages: one from 1865 to 1866 when the revolution in the South was stopped by conservative Northern bourgeoisie, the second from 1867 to the early 1870s when Radical Republicans gained more control in Washington, joining with black masses and white allies to use armed force to create a democratic "regime" in the South, and ending in 1876 when Northern capitalism broke with the masses in the South, throwing its weight against their struggles, dooming blacks living in the South.

93 Such Union Leagues were when blacks, facing numerous hostile white inhabitants, including secret white terrorist organizations, "brandished their guns" and were willing to defend themselves, maintain their freedom, with such armed resistance feared by the Klan who thought there would be retaliation (Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*; Akinyele Omowale Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement*; Umoja, "Eye for An Eye: The Role of Armed Resistance in the

organizations of a political nature, led the Negroes' armed opposition to the terrorism of the planters and played an important role in the Negroes' struggle for land. In many places Negroes seized sections of land.⁹⁴ The Negroes demanded a division of the large plantations in the Southern states. However, the overwhelming majority of the bourgeois representatives of the North was against these demands,

condemning thus the very revolutionary reforms to failure.⁹⁵



Reaction of radical South toward Negro after North does not follow up her promises to the Negro. Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

The victory in the Civil War was won by widespread peoples' masses; but chiefly the upper bourgeoisie, seeking a compromise with the planters, profited by its fruits. By 1872 former rebels received political rights.⁹⁶ In the beginning of the 1870's a split occurred in the Republican Party; a substantial part of the Republican representatives protested against continuing the Reconstruction of the South. In 1877, in conditions which had become strained in the North in the class war of the seventies, an agreement known as the Tilden-Hayes Compromise was effected between the bourgeoisie of the North and the former slaveowners of the South.⁹⁷ In the presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes, the military dictatorship in the South was completely abolished. The Northern bourgeoisie, having betrayed their wartime associates, entered into an agreement with Southern planters aimed at suppressing the movements of the working class, the farmers, and the Negro people. The agrarian question in the South remained unsettled. The bourgeoisie, putting into effect a policy of compromise in

regard to the planters of the South, attempted "to reestablish all possible, to do all possible and impossible for the most shameful and base oppression of the Negroes."⁹⁸

The sections of land taken over by the Negroes were almost everywhere taken away.⁹⁹ With the help of intimidation and violence, of the organization of Lynch courts and bloody massacres, the Negroes were deprived of virtually all rights. The unjust position of the Negroes was fixed by a series of racist laws later passed in the Southern states.¹⁰⁰ Racial discrimination in regard to Mexicans and immigrants from Asian

Mississippi Freedom Movement; Mark Wahlgren Summers, *The Ordeal of the Reunion: A New History of Reconstruction*).
94 Free blacks had a thirst for land with some trying to "teach" blacks self-help but this did not get very far but the increase of land ownership by blacks was supported by Radical Republican governments in the American South even as some blacks were caught up in the restrictive sharecropping system (Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*).

95 Such abandonment would be the beginning of the Northerners looking the other way but also would align with Northerners taking over former plantations in the South and "forgiving" the South for its sins (Lawrence N. Powell, *New Masters: Northern Planters During the Civil War and Reconstruction*).

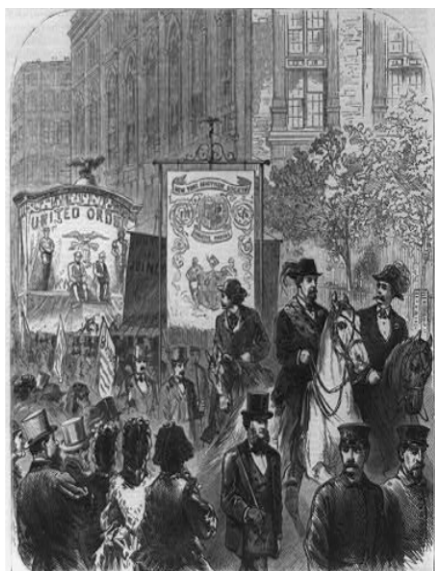
96 The Amnesty Act of 1872 was a law which removed voting and other restrictions against the Confederates who rebelled against the Union, except for 500 Confederate military leaders, meaning that over 150,000 former troops of the Confederate Army could officially participate in politics once again!

97 Also called the Compromise of 1877, this informal agreement meant that "any pretense of federal intervention in Mississippi and the former Confederacy was dropped for decades" and terroristic violence was unleashed to secure the white supremacist system in the South and its white leaders (Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back*).

98 V.I. Lenin, *Works*, Fourth Edition, Vol. 22, p. 13.

99 White terror was used to wrest control out of freed black peoples and put it into the control of whites once again.

countries was also preserved in this way. Indians, confined to reservations, did not receive any kind of rights, even formally.¹⁰¹



Eight-hour labor protest in New York in 1871. Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

In connection with the inflation beginning in the period of the Civil War, as well as speculation and the development of high prices, the living standard of workers and laboring farmers declined sharply. The stratification of the farmers gained strength, and their dependence on banks grew. The majority of farmers who had received lands in accordance with the Homestead Act were quickly ruined. Their lands were seized by joint-stock companies and banks.¹⁰² The bourgeoisie laid the burden of the huge government debt, which was over \$2,800,000,000 on the shoulders of the workers. The class struggle was intensified, so that it made its manifestation in the strengthening of workers' and farmers' movements. In 1865 a league was formed for the struggle for an eight-hour working day.¹⁰³ In 1866 the National Workers' Union, which existed until the beginning of the 1870s, was organized under the leadership of William H. Sylvius.¹⁰⁴ Socialist influence became stronger.

As far back as the 1850's the Communist Club of New York had been organized. In 1887 in the USA sections of the First Internationale appeared.¹⁰⁵ Marxist ideas were being diffused. In 1867 the farm organization, the "Grangers," members of the "National Society for the Promotion of Agriculture," appeared.¹⁰⁶ In 1868 the Workers' Party was formed.¹⁰⁷ An organization of Negro workers was created.¹⁰⁸ As a result of the opposition of the workers, there were reductions in a number of states of bills prohibiting

100 These racist laws, called "Jim Crow" or "Jane Crow" laws, coupled with lynching becoming common in every state, were [segregation statutes](#) by legally disenfranchising blacks and supported white supremacy (Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back*).

101 Discrimination against Asian and Mexican immigrants, and indigenous peoples (pushed onto reservations) was part of the racist culture of the time. Between 1848 and 1928, almost 600 Mexicans were lynched, a fact often overlooked, and "[the campaign against the Chinese](#)" continued in full force during this time, with laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act (Carrigan and Web, "The lynching of persons of Mexican origin or descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928").

102 At a speech at the National Cathedral [in March 1968](#), Martin Luther King, Jr. criticized the [Homestead Act of 1862](#), saying that while the Emancipation Proclamation didn't give blacks any land, "an act of Congress was giving away millions of acres of land in the West and Midwest...to undergird its white peasants from Europe with an economic floor." In the same speech he also criticized the [Morrill Act of 1862](#), connecting it to the Homestead Act, which created segregated land-grant colleges, saying that the United States "build land-grant colleges to teach them how to farm...provided county agents to further their expertise in farming...[and] provided low interest rates so they could mechanize their farms." King ended by saying that those who continue to get federal subsidies every year to not far, are often "the very people who tell Negroes that they must lift themselves by their own bootstraps" and that it is "all right to tell a man to lift himself by his own bootstraps, but it is just cruel to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps."

103 After the Civil War, "eight-hour leagues" [sprung up everywhere](#), as a new independent labor movement gained force, with such leagues dying during the financial crisis in 1873, but the struggle for an eight-hour day continued onward.

104 The National Labor Union, [formed in August 1866](#), included by a young man who was a leader of the Iron-Molders International Union and of the eight-hour movement, William H. Sylvius, a man who tried to "influence the National Labor Union to establish relations with the General Council of the International."

105 Talk about Communist Club of New York was one of the first Communist organizations in the United States, which seemed to fade by the time of the Civil War, but [did unite](#) with the German General Worker's Union to form a branch of the International Workingmen's Association (IWA) in 1867, and other combinations by 1887.

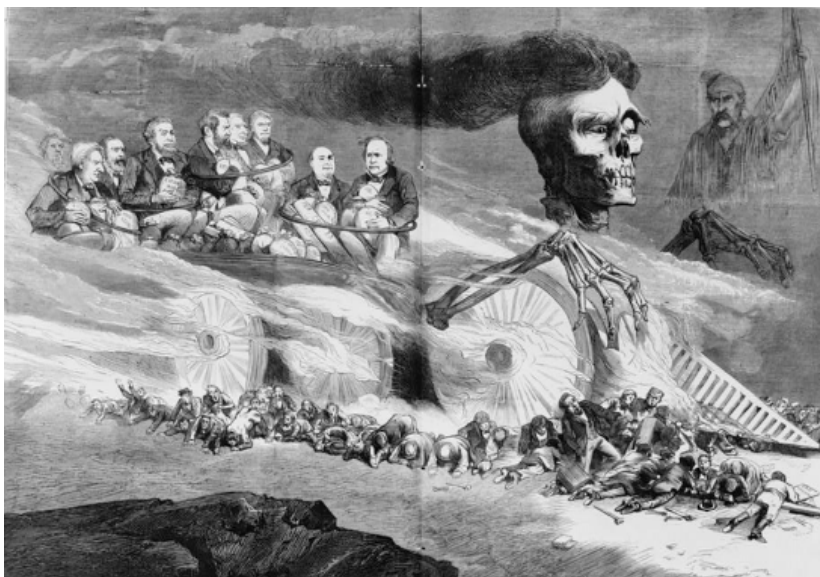
106 The Grangers [demanded regulation of railroads](#), and once in power in numerous state legislatures, enacted laws to limit charges of railroad companies, later to play a large role in coming "partisan contests" in later decades, going beyond promoting the interests of farmers.

107 The formation of a "worker's party" likely refers to many sections of the International [formed in cities across the US](#) in 1868, along with the Social Party of New York and Vicinity.

strikes.¹⁰⁹ However, the workers' movement in the USA developed under difficult conditions. The large fluctuation of labor impeded the formation of permanent cadres of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie succeeded in weakening the worker movement by bribing the workers' leaders, by creating employers' organizations, by urging worker-Americans against Negroes and immigrants, and by stirring up national differences among worker-immigrants from various countries.

From Reconstruction to The First World War

In the period which followed the Civil War and the Reconstruction of the South, the USA changed into a highly developed industrial capitalistic country. In volume of industrial output it stood fourth in the world in 1860, but by 1894 it was already in first place. The abolition of slavery as a system, the vast expansion of the domestic market after the war, the availability of rich natural resources, the wide application of new techniques, the massive immigration to the USA from various countries, as well as the influx of capital from Europe contributed to this. The increasingly intensified process of concentrating capital was taking place. The activity of large-scale corporations and millionaires, such as



1873 illustration showing financiers and politicians, on large train, crushing American working men. Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

Cornelius Vanderbilt, Andrew Carnegie, John Rockefeller, and J.P. Morgan, expanded. In 1870 the Standard Oil Company was formed, whose control by 1879 extended to more than 90 percent of the oil industry of the USA. Other large monopolies were likewise formed in various branches of the national economy. In 1895 the National Association of Manufacturers was formed—the largest organization of USA monopolists. The activities of capitalistic monopolies, especially in railroad construction, were accompanied by the plundering of the government land reserve and the treasury, by monstrous speculation and corruption, which added particular acuteness to the economic crises. All the forces of reaction united for the fight against the increasingly strong movement of the workers and farmers. A rapprochement took place between the Republican and the Democratic parties, which had turned into the parties of the upper bourgeoisie. The Republican Party was in power almost all the time with the administrations of Andrew Johnson, 1865-1869, Ulysses S. Grant, 1869-1877, Rutherford B. Hayes, 1877-1881, James Garfield, 1881, Charles A. Arthur, 1881-1885, William Henry Harrison, 1889-1893. The Democratic Party succeeded in winning in presidential elections only twice with the administrations of Grover Cleveland in 1885-1889 and 1893-1897.

108 During the 1870s, the Colored National Labor Union (CNLU), founded in 1869, “[expanded until it had locals in 23 states](#). The CNLU associated itself with the International Workingmen’s Association led by Karl Marx.”

109 According to reliable sources, by the 1880s, 35 states subjected labor activities to possible persecution for being illegal conspiracies and only three states did otherwise.

Customs tariffs were raised in the interests of the upper bourgeoisie, and a law was passed adopting the gold standard. The best land from the national reserve was turned over to speculators, railroad and other companies. A northern railroad company alone received about forty-four million acres of land.¹¹⁰ The financial policy of the government, the high protective tariffs, the increase in prices in industrial trade, and the plundering of the national land reserve by the upper bourgeoisie placed the farmers, who had fallen more and more into dependence on banks, in a difficult position. All this aggravated the dissatisfaction of the farmers and provoked an intensification of the farmer movement.



An illustration in 1880 which is a caricature of the Greenback Party. Courtesy of [the Library of Congress](#).

In the 1870's the farmers' Greenback Party was formed. In 1878 the Greenback Party united with workers' organizations and began to be called the National Workers' Greenback Party.¹¹¹ This party demanded the continued circulation of paper money (which in the mistaken thinking of the farmers would have to lead to the raising of prices on agricultural products), the restraining of capitalist corporations, the introduction of a progressive income tax, the

lowering of protective tariffs, and the introduction of an eight-hour working day. In the congressional elections of 1878 the Greenback Party received over a million votes, but shortly thereafter the party collapsed for lack of consistent revolutionary leadership.¹¹² With the aim of weakening the farm movement Congress made several concessions to the farmers, having retained, notwithstanding the President's veto, the circulation of paper money. The economic crisis and the following depression, from 1873 to 1878 made the position of the working class acutely worse. In 1877 in the USA the unemployed numbered about three million.¹¹³ Wages of workers declined 40 to 50 percent. Strikes of the workers and rallies of the unemployed occurred all over the country. With the object of eliminating the power of the workers, legal reprisals were executed upon the workers' leaders. Thus, after a strike of the Pennsylvania miners, from 1874 to 1875, many of its leaders were sentenced to death or to long prison terms on fictitious charges. In 1877 troops suppressed a large-scale strike of railroad workers, the Great Railroad Strike.

In 1876 the Workingmen's Party, later SLP, was formed from several Socialist groups.¹¹⁴ Friedrich Adolph Sorge, a German Marxist, student and comrade of Marx and Engels, living in the USA took an active part in the formation of the party.¹¹⁵ However, the SLP, weakened by sectarianism, did not become the party of the masses. The growth of the party and its influence with the masses was impeded by the social heterogeneity

110 This company, Northern Pacific, received millions of acres, like other companies, from the federal government for their railroad (A.J. Youngson Brown, *The American Economy 1860-1940*; Jonathan R.T. Hughes, *The Government Habit Redux*).

111 Before this point, the Greenbacks demanded continued use of currency during the Civil War, and resumption of purchasing gold, but by 1878, they demanded limits to the working day, land reform, and cheaper currency.

112 That may be true, but also propaganda from the Southern Democrats was a factor, among other reasons.

113 The combined effects of what was called the "Long Depression," from 1873 to 1896, and heightened class struggle, and resulted in increased pressures among imperialist states and rivalries among imperial powers leading to war.

114 This group became the Socialistic Labor Party (SLP) in 1877 and the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) by the 1880s.

115 Sorge (sometimes his name is spelled Zorge) [was a loyal comrade](#) to the working class movement, with a touching friendship with Marx and Engels over the years and leader of the First International [chapter in the US](#).

of its composition, by the construction of the party on the basis of individual national groups, and by its disregard of work in the trade unions.¹¹⁶ In 1878 the Knights of Labor, founded before in 1869, became a lawful and masses' trade-union organization. In 1881 the American Federation of Labor or AFL, was formed, built on a guild pattern. The AFL—in which Samuel Gompers and other trade-union leaders who had pursued opportunist policies and were justly called the "workers; lieutenants of the class of capitalists" seized the leadership became a reform organization.

Further aggravation of the class struggle arose especially in connection with the economic crisis of the 1880's. In several states workers', farmer-workers', and farmers' parties sprang up. The development of the revolutionary, workers' movement manifested itself in a series of large-scale class actions. In 1885 a widespread strike of Pennsylvania miners took place; in 1886 a vast strike of the railroad workers. On May 1, 1886, a wave of strikes and demonstrations rolled through the entire country.¹¹⁷ The demonstrators demanded the establishment of an eight-hour working day. In Chicago, where the strike was almost universal, the demonstration of the workers underwent attack by the police. During a meeting in Chicago on May 4 provocateurs, aiming to enforce antiworker repressions, threw a bomb which resulted in the deaths of four workers and seven policemen. On the basis of false testimony by provocateurs, four organizers of the meeting were executed and many of its participants were sentenced to long prison terms.¹¹⁸

The struggle of the workers of the USA for an eight-hour working day received the support of the international workers' movement. At the first Congress of the Second Internationale in Paris (1889), the first of May was announced as the day of international solidarity of the proletariat and of the struggle of workers throughout the world for an eight-hour working day. Aiming to strengthen repressions against the popular mass movement, the large-scale capitalists and landowners effected a series of antidemocratic measures. A revision of state constitutions, to strengthen local executive authority, began.¹¹⁹ The National Guard was reorganized; parts of it were subordinated to the federal General Staff. The bourgeoisie stirred up racial and nationality differences. Negro workers and immigrants were subjected to cruel exploitation and discrimination. At the same time the American bourgeoisie bribed the workers' aristocracy and the trade union bureaucracy. The American working class did not have a militant revolutionary party. The Socialist Labor Party, despite several positive results, did not free itself from the mistake of sectarianism and therefore did not change into the party of the masses. The leader of the party, Daniel De Leon, exposed the opportunists, but instead made his own sectarian mistakes.¹²⁰ The Socialist Workers' Party repudiated the work of the reformist trade unions. De Leon came forward in



Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

116 At the first convention in 1877, the prohibition against participation in party politics [was removed](#), then in later years the party moved into a more "trade unionist perspective," and factionalism by 1889.

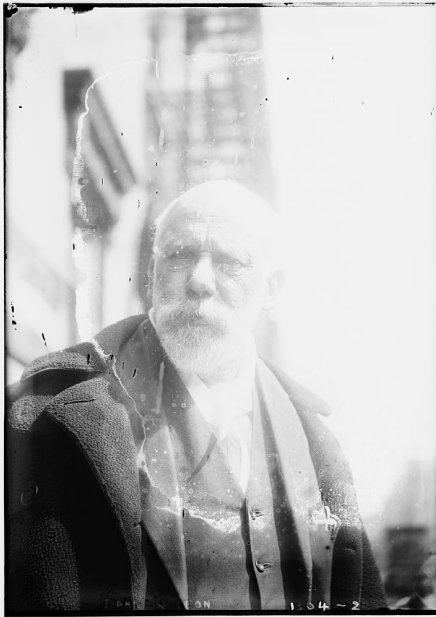
117 Clearly, the number of "strikes during 1885 and 1886 as compared with previous years shows what [a spirit of militancy](#) was animating the labor movement."

118 While some have said that charges against those who engaged in the Haymarket Riot [were justified](#), it seemed evident that those who were [accused of throwing a bomb](#) at several police officers were framed.

119 Writing about constitutional revisionism seems to come from C. Vann Woodward's *Origins of the New South*.

defense of the reactionary theory of “the uniqueness of American capitalism.”¹²¹ Sectarian mistakes of the SLP aided the reformists in carrying out a policy of dividing the Socialist movement. Engels sharply criticized the American Socialists, pointing out that for them Marxism was a dogma but not a guide for action.

The government pursued a policy of severe repressions against the workers' and farmers' organizations. In 1890 under the pressure of the antitrust movement the Sherman Act, called "antitrust," was passed.



Photograph of De Leon in 1900. Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

However, this law was used for prosecution of trade unions and for the battle with strikes, actually helping the activities of the monopolistic combines. The number of monopolies increased sharply. Many farmers were ruined; 28 per cent of the total number of farms were mortgaged to banks. In 1892 a farmers' party, the Populists, which many workers' organizations supported, arose. The party advanced a program directed against banks and capitalistic companies. In the presidential elections of 1892 the Populists receive over one million votes. But in the elections of 1896 the Democratic Party took over the most popular Populist slogans in order to undermine their chances for further success. In 1895 a socialist professional and worker alliance was formed, the organizer of which was De Leon.

In the workers' movement the conflict of two tendencies—revolutionary and reformist—grew more acute. In the beginning of the 1890's miners were on strike repeatedly; in 1892 there was a powerful strike of metalworkers in Homestead, Pennsylvania; in 1894, a large-scale strike of railroad workers which had begun in the factories of the Pullman Palace Car Company in the suburbs of Chicago. The American Railway Union, led by Eugene Debs, was at the head of the Pullman strike. The Homestead and Pullman strikes were suppressed

by the government with the help of armed force.

The USA pursued an expansionist foreign policy. The American bourgeoisie strove to oust English capital from Latin America and to transform the Latin American countries into a source of raw materials and an exclusive market for the USA. With this object, the USA under the flag of Pan-Americanism, summoned to a conference in Washington the representatives of the American States. As far back as 1867 the USA had succeeded in buying Alaska from the czarist government of Russia for the paltry sum of \$7,200,000. Ruling circles of the USA pushed their expansion into Asia. In 1871 the USA undertook the policy of military invasion of Korea.¹²² In 1882 it bound Korea to a one-sided agreement. In 1889 the USA signed an

120 De Leon was a graduate of Columbia Law School and [he tried to integrate](#) the organization within the AFL and became involved in promoting revolutionary trade unions, along with further factionalism by the early 1900s.

121 De Leon, [dedicated](#) to his ideals, but [seemed to distort](#) the theories of Marx and Engels, pushing for revolution by way of trade unions, a strange way of revolution.

122 On June 10 and 12, 1871, as the “[Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2016](#)” notes, a “U.S. naval force attacked and captured five forts to punish natives for depredations on Americans, particularly for murdering the crew of the USS General Sherman and burning the schooner and for later firing on other American small boats taking soundings up the Salee River.” In the operation note that 750 soldiers (and marines) were deployed, most of whom were on the land, under the command of Lt. Commander Silas Casey, in an operation where about 350 Koreans were killed and only three US soldiers, with the battle of Ganghwa, at the “Citadel” fort, a political defeat for the United States, with Koreans remembering General Uh Ye Yeon/Eo Jae-yeon, along with the other Koreans killed, in a battle like the one at [the Alamo](#) (Bob Navarro, *The Gilded Age: The Forgotten Executives*). While the Korean expedition did not succeed, US forces were withdrawn, and “isolationist” policies were retained by Korea, in 1882, [a treaty](#) affirmed US imperialistic desires.

agreement with England and Germany concerning a protectorate over the islands of Samoa. In 1893 the USA organized a revolution in the Hawaiian Islands and after that the Hawaiian Republic was formed with a government completely dependent on the USA.¹²³

The USA in the period of imperialism (to the beginning of the First World War)

By the end of the nineteenth century American capitalism had entered the stage of imperialism. The growth of capitalistic monopolies was taking place; the process of concentrating manufacture and capital had gained strength; the export of capital became more intensive; expansionist foreign policy swelled sharply. The entry of the USA into the imperialist stage was characterized by the growth of reaction in all policy, both in the spheres of domestic and foreign policy. The process of the concentration of capital in the USA took place more quickly and in a broader range than in other countries. After the crisis of 1900-1903, monopolies became the basis of the entire economic structure of the country. V. I. Lenin characterized American trusts as “the highest expression of the economics of imperialism or monopolistic capitalism.”¹²⁴



Theodore Roosevelt and his Big Stick in the Caribbean, 1904 illustration by William Allen Rodgers.

By the end of the nineteenth century the USA had outdistanced old capitalistic states in economic strength. Together with the growth of monopolies grew their supremacy over the economic and political life of the country and the subordination of government authority to monopolistic capital. A financial oligarchy determined the domestic and foreign policy of the administrations of the Republican Party during the administrations of William McKinley, 1897-1901, Teddy Roosevelt, 1901-1909, William Taft, 1909-1913, and of the Democratic Party during the administration of Woodrow Wilson, 1913-1921.

The administration of Teddy Roosevelt, trying to win favor among the popular masses, protested against the oppression of the monopolies, instigated suits against a number of trusts on the basis of the so-called "antitrust" Sherman Act. However, corporations escaped with small fines or revived under new names after their dissolution. The preservation of high custom tariffs, which had been raised in 1909 on many goods, was favorable to the interests of monopolistic capital.

At the end of the nineteenth century in the USA, the worker movement gained strength. In 1898 Eugene Debs organized the Social Democratic Party which formed the basic nucleus of the Socialist Party, formed in 1900-1901.¹²⁵ The creation of the Socialist Party became a positive factor in the development of the

123 As noted in Stephen Kinzer's *Overthrow*, the revolution in 1893 was organized with agreement and approval from the US government and conducted by a small group of marines in order to put in place a US-friendly government

124 *Works*, Fourth Edition, vol. 23, p. 32. This quote likely comes from Lenin's book, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* which was written in 1917 but is still very relevant today.

125 The Social Democratic Party of America (1899-1901) became Socialist Party of America, which stayed in place in 1972, and then splintered into many different organizations thereafter like Social Democrats, USA, Socialist Party USA, and the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee which later became the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)

workers' movement in the USA. However, this party did not become the revolutionary party of the working class. Reducing all political work to the struggle for position in Congress, it changed into a reformist party.

The government brutally suppressed the strike movement. In 1902 it frustrated by its intervention the strike of 150,000 coal miners who were fighting for a shorter working day, an increase of wages, and the recognition of trade unions. The leaders of the union of coal miners betrayed the interests of the workers and came to an agreement with the employers and the government. As in the domestic policy, the course of the USA in foreign policy was determined by large-scale monopolies.¹²⁶ With the end of the nineteenth

century, the striving to win a dominant position in the world market began to become more strongly apparent in the ruling circles of the USA. The USA declared its claims to a broad share in colonial expansion. However, by this time an agreement was made among the other capitalistic states.



Uncle Sam boots Spanish pirate out of Cuba and New World, April 1898 cartoon

The Spanish-American War of 1898, unleashed by the USA in April, 1898, was the first imperialist war for the redivision of the world. The USA compelled Spain, who had suffered defeat, to give up her transoceanic colonies. As a result of the Spanish-American War the USA seized the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico and established virtual supremacy over Cuba, which from 1899 to 1902 was subject to American occupation. Under pressure of the imperialists of the USA the so-called Platt Amendment, which gave the USA the "right" of intervention, was inserted into the Constitution of Cuba in 1901. Having taken advantage of the national-liberation movement in the Philippines in the struggle against Spain, the USA then brutally suppressed it from 1899 to 1901. In 1898 the USA officially annexed the Hawaiian Islands. In 1899 an

agreement was reached on the partition of the islands of Samoa between the USA and Germany. In 1903 the USA organized a revolution in Panama, as a result of which Panama seceded from Columbia. The USA established its virtual domination in the Panama Republic and in 1903 pressed a treaty on it, in accordance with which it took the Panama Canal Zone with the construction of the canal was completed in 1914.¹²⁷ In 1905-1907 the USA pressed an agreement on the Dominican Republic, according to which the American government took to itself the "settlement" of her foreign debt. The Dominican Republic was transformed into the object of the monopolistic authority of the USA. Trying to subordinate Latin American and other countries to its own supremacy, the USA made wide use of dollar diplomacy, combined with direct armed intervention and the suppression of liberation movements.

With the aim of furthering its expansion in China, the USA in 1899 proclaimed the so-called "open door" doctrine. Because of demagogic demands for "equal opportunities" for all powers in China, the aim of the USA to subordinate all of China to its own influence was hidden. The imperialist policy of the USA in China became apparent also in the suppression in 1900-1901 of the popular rebellion, lasting from 1899 to 1901, in China against foreign oppressors.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ The role of corporations in US foreign policy is no surprise. Already, the US [tried to wet its imperialistic desires](#) by trying to acquire Santo Domingo in 1867, take over Samoa in the 1870s, and annexing Hawaii in 1898.

¹²⁷ The Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty of 1903, referenced here, [gave the US control](#) of the canal zone and helped cement the position of the Panamanian bourgeoisie as helping assist US imperialism.

The administration of Teddy Roosevelt, having accomplished a broad program of foreign policy expansion, supported Japan in the preparation of a war against Russia. In the period of the Russo-Japanese war, 1904-1905, it gave economic, financial, and diplomatic assistance to Japan. The USA virtually gave Japan its consent to seize Korea with the Taft-Katsura Agreement. After signing the Portsmouth Peace Treaty in 1905, Japan closed the USA's access to Manchuria. Negotiations with Japan, having been accompanied by a demonstration of the strength of the USA Navy in the Far East, were concluded by signing the Root-Takahira Agreement between Japan and the USA in 1908 on the Pacific Ocean Basin.

The revolution of 1905-1907 in Russia found a ready response in the USA. In a number of cities, such as Boston and San Francisco, societies—"The Friends of Russian Freedom"—were formed. The impact of the revolution in Russia encouraged the strengthening of the workers' movement in the USA. In 1905 the trade-union organization "Industrial Workers of the World" (IWW) was founded, fighting for the organization of trade unions on an industrial basis, in contradistinction to the former guild trade unions. Large-scale strikes of miners took place in 1907 and 1912; of longshoremen in 1909 and 1910; of textile workers in 1912; and of others. The IWW led many strikes; however, it tolerated serious sectarian mistakes; in 1908 anarcho-syndicalists seized the leadership through this organization. The struggle of the Negro people for their rights, a struggle against racial discrimination, assumed larger scope. In 1909 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) appeared.



Photo shows man wearing hat with card "Bread or revolution" at IWW in 1914. Courtesy of [the Library of Congress](#).

In 1912 a conference of the Socialist Party took place. The right-wing leaders of the party succeeded at the conference in passing a resolution in which the party in essence renounced the revolutionary struggle and declared the basis of its activities to be participation in the election campaigns. The worker's aristocracy—which the bourgeoisie bribed for the huge profits gained by it as a result of the increase in exploitation of the working class, of the farmers, and of the Negro people, and in foreign-policy expansion—furnished the social basis of opportunism.¹²⁹

During the time of the presidential elections of 1912 a group headed by Teddy Roosevelt detached itself from the Republican Party, coming forward as the National Progressive Party, which disintegrated after the elections. In its election platform it promised to contend with the trusts, to introduce the most progressive factory legislation, and to carry out a number of other reforms. The program and propaganda of the "Progressives" was an attempt to save capitalism with the help of bourgeois reforms. As a result of the split in the Republican Party, the candidate of the Democratic Party, Woodrow Wilson, was elected President, having received a small plurality of the votes. The candidate of the Socialist Party, Eugene Debs, received about one million votes. Striving to paralyze the growth of the socialist movement, Wilson declared that the

128 Official government documents [say](#) that US troops "participated in operations to protect foreign lives during the Boxer [up]rising, particularly at Peking" and that a permanent legation guard was posted at Peking for many years afterward. The full story is that over one thousand marines [directly suppressed](#) those engaged in the rebellion, involving US naval vessels, alongside forces from Britain, Italy, Germany, Russia, and Japan, all of which had interests in the country.

129 The Socialist Party, beset by division, pushed for government ownership of mines and other production in 1912, but during the war some broke and supported the war as [noted by Mary Beard](#).

"Era of the New Freedom" was beginning; however, his political course conformed completely to the interests of the large-scale monopolies.¹³⁰ The subordination of the government to the financial oligarchy increased. The Federal Reserve System of banks was established under the direct instructions of the monopolies. Reserve banks were supposed to consolidate the activity of all local banks, and they received extensive rights in regard to issuing banknotes. A federal deliberative board, into which the largest barons of financial capital entered, became the real leader of all financial policy.¹³¹ The Wilson administration resorted to repression for the suppression of strikes. The large-scale strike of miners in the state of Colorado in 1913-1914 was suppressed by troops in Lowell, Colorado.



Illustration criticizing the power of Rockefeller's oil monopoly Standard Oil

From the First World War to the Present

The USA during the First World War, 1914-1918

After the outbreak of the First World War, 1914-1918, the USA declared on August 4, 1914, that it would preserve neutrality. American monopolies took to themselves the role of providing foodstuffs, ammunition, and loans to the belligerent states, mainly the countries of the Entente. An economic recession impending in 1913-1914 had already changed, by 1915 as a result of the war situation, into an upswing. American monopolists, especially the financial group of Morgan, made huge profits in deliveries to the European countries. The USA took advantage of its period of neutrality for military, economic, political, and ideological preparation for entry into the war. In 1916 a law was passed expanding the Navy, increasing appropriations for the Army and, in connection with these, increasing taxes. In August, 1916, the Committee of National Defense was formed, with the object of preparing for the mobilization of industry. The desire of the American monopolies to maintain maximum profits inevitably pushed the USA towards direct participation in the war for the redivision of the world.

Points of opposition existed between the USA and the countries of the Entente, especially England; however, in this period the conflict between the USA and Germany became particularly intense. At the end of 1915 Colonel E. House, Wilson's special confidential agent, announced: "The USA cannot allow the defeat of its allies, leaving Germany dominant over the world through a military factor."¹³²

¹³⁰ It is quite possible that Wilson wanted to blunt socialist movement and serve established interests since he engaged in US imperialism while officially opposing European imperialism, a strange policy indeed.

¹³¹ The Federal Reserve Board, which this refers to, [unified the country's banking system](#), offered the opportunity of financial supremacy, and reinforced the order of US capitalism.

¹³² The quote is likely incorrect due to translation error. House, said, as noted by numerous sources that "It will not so for the United States to let Allies go down and leave Germany the dominant military factor in the world."

Economic ties between the USA and the countries of the Entente strengthened substantially during the years of neutrality. American financial barons granted credit and loans worth millions to the countries of the Entente and feared to lose them in the event of a German victory. Tension grew still more in the relations between the USA and Germany in connection with the ruthless submarine war conducted by Germany.¹³³

On April 6, 1917, the USA declared war on Germany. The period of USA participation in the war was characterized by the intensification in the country of political reaction, by the increase of militarists, by the transition to a military economy, and by a still more open submission of government authority to the monopolies. During the years of the war the living standard of workers declined.¹³⁴ Prices increased on



New Yorkers carry a peace banner down Fifth Avenue in a protest against the First World War.

foodstuffs and articles of broad consumption: in 1917 prices on foods increased on an average of 57 per cent, and in 1918 by 87 per cent in comparison with 1913; prices on clothes correspondingly rose 49 per cent in 1917 and 105 per cent in 1918. The increase of prices, the huge increase in taxes, the compulsory subscriptions to war loans, the growth of exploitation, the difficult wartime routine, and the presence despite the economic boom of a large army of unemployed led to a worsening of the condition of the working class. The workers responded to the increase of exploitation by numerous strikes. In 1917 over 4,400 strikes took place.

Wilson's administration dealt brutally with the worker movement. An espionage law, in June 1917, declared any anti-war rally of the workers to be treason against the government. Left-wing Socialists and members of the organization, "Industrial Workers of the World," courageously protesting against war, were subjected to repressions. Prominent figures of the American workers' movement, William "Big Bill" Haywood and Eugene Debs, were arrested. A split occurred in connection with the imperialist war in the Socialist Party of the USA, the internationalist wing of which, protesting against war, organized the League of Socialist Propaganda in 1915. The right-wing leadership of the Socialist Party openly supported an imperialist policy. The AFL pursued a policy of "class co-operation" with monopolies. A conference of the AFL in March, 1917, offered its assistance to the government in the event of entry into the war. The leader of the AFL, Gompers, was a member of a committee of the National Defense Committee.

Taking advantage of the fact that the strength of the European states was diverted by the war, the USA in these years increased its expansion in Latin America. In 1914, and again in 1916-1917, the Wilson Administration organized intervention in Mexico. The occupation of Nicaragua begun by the Taft Administration continued, lasting, with a brief interruption, until 1933. During 1915-1934 the USA occupied Haiti; from 1916 to 1924, the Dominican Republic. In 1917-1922 a US intervention in Cuba took place. In 1916 the USA forced Denmark to sell it the Danish West Indies.¹³⁵ During the war, the USA concluded an agreement with Japan at the expense of China in the Lansing-Ishii Agreement. However, this agreement was not able to check further intensification of American-Japanese differences. The war brought unprecedented profits to American monopolists. The average annual income of USA corporations in 1916-1918 was approximately \$4,000,000,000 more than the average annual income in 1912-1914.

133 In 1915, the US States government was secretly loaning to the British which benefited the powerful Wall Street banks.

134 From 1917 to 1919, consumer prices for all items were not steady, as noted by the [Consumer Price Index](#).

135 The Danish sold the islands (later U.S. Virgin Islands) [in 1917](#), with the sale affirmed resonance of the Monroe Doctrine

The February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 in Russia made American ruling circles, fearful of the withdrawal of Russia from the war, extremely uneasy. The USA hastened to recognize the bourgeois Provisional Government and supported it with huge loans.¹³⁶

As a result of the First World War, the USA was transformed from a debtor to the largest creditor, to whom the countries of Europe found themselves indebted for over ten billion dollars. Almost all the countries of the Entente fell into the debt with the USA. Lenin pointed out that American multimillionaires, more than anyone, profited by the war. Foreign trade of the USA grew substantially. In the period from 1913 to 1920 the trade of the USA., with the countries of Latin America, increased almost four times. Over half of the world's gold reserves was concentrated in the USA. The war stimulated development of a branches of heavy industry. Several new areas of industry were developed. The process of centralizing capital grew. By the end of the First World War, 1 percent of the people controlled more than 50 percent of US wealth.¹³⁷

The USA in the period between the two World Wars

A general crisis of capitalism began in the period of the First World War, and especially as a result of the defection of Soviet Russia from the capitalistic system. After the First World War the development of the revolutionary workers' and farmers' movement began in the USA. The impact of the Great October Socialist Revolution was of profound significance in strengthening the revolutionary movement in the USA.¹³⁸ In 1919 the number of strikes in the USA grew substantially. The most important were the strike of 365,000 steelworkers, of which the organizer was William Z. Foster, and the strike of 435,000 miners. In this same year powerful strikes occurred in the ports of New York and Seattle. Along with England and France, the USA was an accomplice in the intervention against Soviet Russia. The USA implemented open military intervention in the Soviet North and in the Soviet Far East, from 1918-1920.

In January, 1918, Wilson came forward with an imperialist program of peace—the so-called "Fourteen-Point program." Together with other imperialist states, the USA tried to take advantage of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919-1920 to broaden the intervention in, and the organization of a blockade of Soviet Russia. Wilson achieved the inclusion in the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919 of the Charter of the League of Nations. He strove to use the League of Nations in the interests of the foreign policy of the USA. However, the Versailles Treaty was not ratified by the USA Senate. A number of prominent bourgeois political figures, such as Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Secretary of State Robert Lansing, and others, voted against involving the USA as a participant in the League of Nations, in which England and France had leading roles.¹³⁹ They protested sharply against the concessions to Japan effected by Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference and endangering USA positions in China. A majority of the Republicans, including Lodge, Herbert Hoover, and



Anti-capitalist IWW poster in 1911

¹³⁶ This reality led to understandable and justifiable resentment by the Soviet government which took power in October.

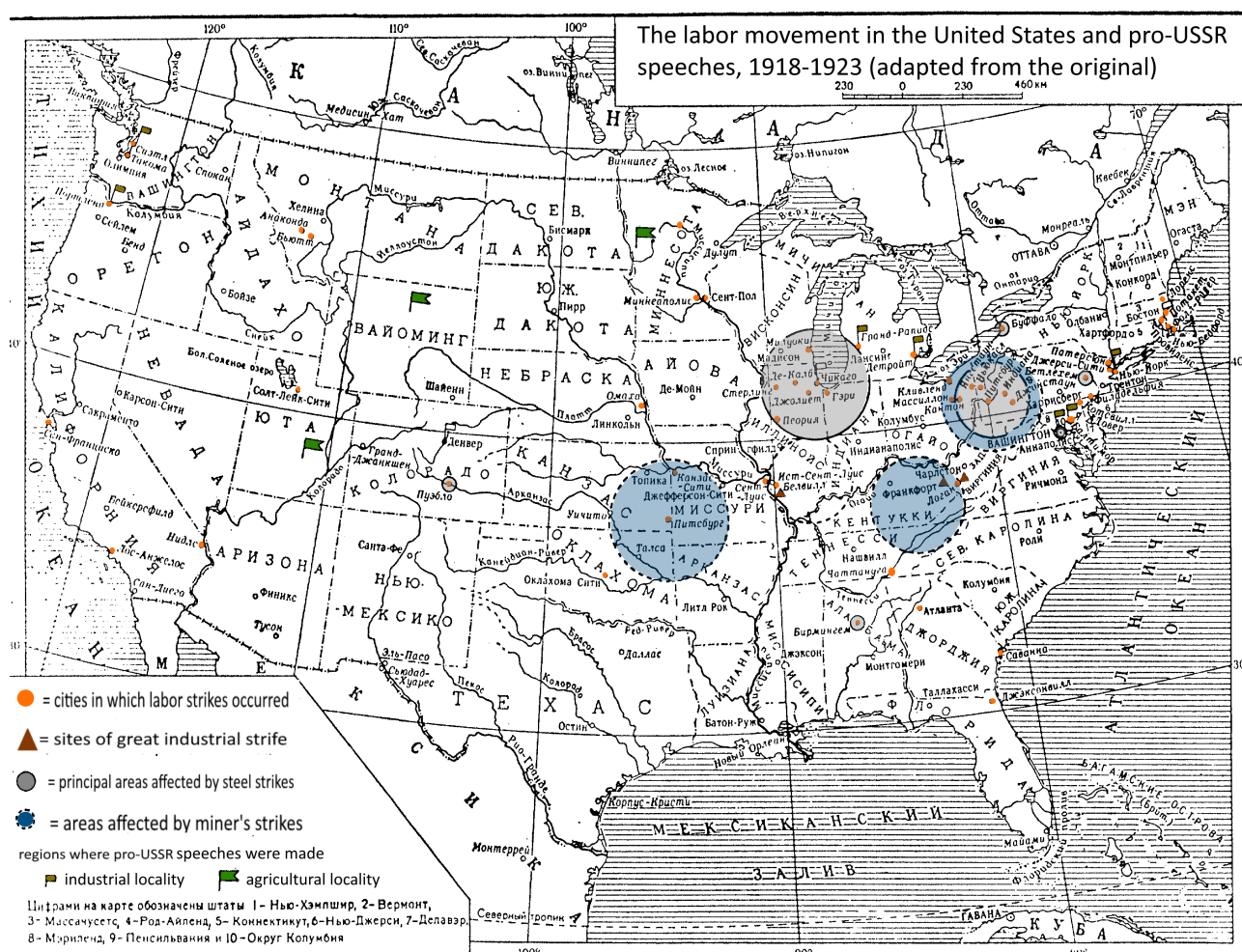
¹³⁷ These figures might be drawn from Anna Rochester's *Rulers of America: A Study of Finance Capital*. Otherwise the war concentrated power in J.P. Morgan and expanded US capitalism to more foreign markets (Zinn, *A People's History*).

¹³⁸ While radicals were battered by anti-democratic repressive measures in WWI, a movement could have existed.

¹³⁹ Lodge had [fourteen reservations](#) against the League which were basically imperialistic demands, while Lansing did not see the League of Nations as essential to the treaty.

others, opposed Wilson under the slogan of so-called isolationism.¹⁴⁰ Not having ratified the Wilson treaty, the USA in August, 1921, concluded a separate peace treaty with Germany, almost identical with Wilson's, but not containing the article on the League of Nations.

In conditions favorable for the growth of the masses' revolutionary movement, the Communist Party of the United States of America was founded in September, 1919, which carried on a struggle against the oppression of the capitalists and for the bettering of the position of the working class and of all workers. With the active participation of the Communists, large-scale strikes of dockworkers, who refused to load material for the use of USA interventionist troops in Russia and for the White Guards, took place.



A revised version of a map in the original encyclopedia showing a concentration in labor strikes east of the Mississippi, numerous areas affected by steel and miner's strikes, along with ten cities where pro-USSR speeches were made.

A campaign of protest against USA participation in anti-Soviet intervention unfolded across the entire country. American workers formed the "League of the Friends of Soviet Russia," which organized the gathering of signatures on a petition to the government to cease the intervention and blockade of Russia. Almost 100 trade unions joined in the petition. "Hands Off Russia" committees were also formed. In 1920 the American government was forced to recall its troops from Russia.¹⁴¹

140 Such "isolationism" was often a cover for imperialistic motives.

141 The US put 11,000 troops inside Soviet Russia, with 5,000 troops that were part of the "Polar Bear Expedition" fighting the Red Army directly, and the commander of the American Expeditionary Force Siberia tried to restrain his forces from

In 1920 an economic crisis began in the USA, reaching its highest peak in 1921. In a number of branches of industry the volume of output declined 40 per cent or more. The number of unemployed reached 5,500,000. Wages were reduced. The crisis also gripped agriculture. Ruined farmers went to the cities, enlarging the ranks of the unemployed. The bourgeoisie intensified the attack on the rights of workers. Employers refused to negotiate with trade unions and broke off collective agreements. This policy was rebuffed by the working class. In 1921-1922 more than 2,500,000 workers participated in strikes. Over 600,000 miners took part in a strike of coal workers occurring in 1922. Railroad workers, about 500,000 men, were on strike simultaneously with the coal workers. The administration of the Republican President W. Harding, from 1921 to 1923, with the actual help of the AFL leadership, suppressed a number of strikes. The leaders of the

AFL preached "class co-operation" with the capitalists, and helped them carry out the capitalist streamlining of manufacture leading to an increase in the exploitation of the working class.¹⁴² The leadership of the AFL prevented the admittance into the AFL of Negroes and unskilled workers.



The struggle of the Negro people for democratic rights, and against the intensification of racial discrimination, was crushed by means of severe repressions. In 1917 to 1919 Negro massacres took place in a number of cities. In July, 1919, in Chicago, according to official figures, substantially underestimated, thirty-eight persons were killed and over 500 injured, and hundreds of homes were demolished or burned.¹⁴³

Furniture in street during the riot in Tulsa, Oklahoma (1921).

Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

After the war the economic and political role of the USA in the capitalist world grew considerably. The USA became the center of the financial exploitation of the world. American capital actively penetrated into the economy of many capitalist countries. Together with this, conflict sharpened, especially between the USA and England and between the USA and Japan. Harding's administration, in the interests of monopolies, maintained a policy of developing the expansion of the USA that became strikingly apparent in the course of the Washington Conference, 1921-1922. At the conference a five-power treaty was signed according to which the USA forced England to agree to the equality of the American and British battle fleets. The Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902, which had strengthened the position of England and Japan against the USA in the Far East, was terminated. At the conference a treaty of ten powers was signed, on the initiative of the USA, which indicated the agreement of the imperialists concerning China. Taking advantage of its position as universal creditor, the USA, under the guise of maintaining an "Open Door" policy, actually strove for the maximum consolidation of its positions in China. Repeated proposals by the Soviet government for the normalization of relations between

fighting the Bolsheviks so they served guard duty, but still were against the Bolsheviks, dying horrible deaths in the harsh winter in Siberia, with the US, among other allies, withdrawing in 1920, and the Japanese expelled by 1925.

142 The AFL working with big capitalists was not a break from previous policy but was part of their strategy of working with capitalists to gain concessions rather than taking a more revolutionary stance.

143 There were "race riots" in 14 cities between 1917 and 1921: East St. Louis (1917), Chester, PA (1917), Philadelphia (1917), Houston (1917), Washington D.C. (1919), Chicago (1919), Omaha (1919), Charleston (1919), Longview, TX (1919), Knoxville (1919), Elaine, AK (1919), Oconee, FL (1920), West Frankfort, IL (1920) and Tulsa (1921). In some instances, like in Tulsa, blacks defended with arms themselves against racists (Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land*).

the USA and the USSR were rejected by ruling circles of the USA. In the period of partial, temporary stabilization of capital, which had begun in 1924, the chronic lack of employment remained; there existed underproduction in a number of branches of industry; the number of investors grew; and the export of capital increased with the export of capital in 1929 exceeded the prewar level more than four times. Capitalistic standardization led to the reinforced exploitation of the workers and an increase of the unemployed. The process of the ruination of farmers grew in strength.¹⁴⁴ In 1928 over 300,000 workers struck in the USA. Communists played an active role in leading the strikers.¹⁴⁵

The defenders of American imperialism created a myth of so-called prosperity and of the "uniqueness" of American capitalism. They declared that American capitalism supposedly had its own proper development, completely different from the course of development of European capitalism, and that it did not fear economic crises. These "theories" about the "prosperity" and "uniqueness" of USA capitalism were propagandized in every possible way by reactionary trade-union leaders and other reformists trying to delude the broad masses of workers. In actuality the stabilization of capitalism which was characterized by the sharpening of conflict between the workers and capitalists, between the imperialists and the peoples of the colonial countries and among the imperialists of various countries, was as partial and temporary in the USA as in all the capitalist countries.

During the time of the presidential elections of 1924, a so-called Progressive bloc was formed representing the interests of the farmers and the petty urban bourgeoisie and supported by part of the trade unions. Its origin was provoked by the dissatisfaction of the workers with the policy both of the Republican and Democratic parties. The bloc advocated a program directed at the negligible democratization of government apparatus and toward the bettering of the situation of workers and farmers. Senator Robert LaFollette, who was advanced as the presidential candidate of this bloc, received a substantial number of votes in the elections. After the elections, the bloc collapsed.



1921 Protest in London in favor of Sacco and Vanzetti

The candidate of the Republican Party, Calvin Coolidge, who was Vice-President during the administration of Harding and who had taken the presidential post in 1923 because of the sudden death of Harding, was elected President. The Coolidge Administration, 1923-1929, continued proceedings against Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, participants in the American workers' movement.¹⁴⁶ Sacco and Vanzetti were executed on the basis of deliberately false charges in 1927. The execution of Sacco and Vanzetti provoked a mass campaign of protest in the USA and throughout the world. The Coolidge Administration prevented the passage of bills to help ruined farmers. It raised protective tariffs in the interests of monopolies. The foreign policy of the Coolidge Administration was notable for its unfriendliness in regard to the USSR.

144 Farmers, in an [agricultural depression](#) (1920-1930), struggled with [with low prices](#), [overproduction](#), and lower incomes.

145 The Communist Party, which was [had a small core group](#) but was organized in 1920s, [had a national tour in 1928](#) to thirty-five cities and tens of thousands of their publications in circulation, helped defend miners, and court cases against it. The Party also [paid attention](#) to the organization of a new textile worker's union, with some pushing for more union organizing on a local level, [organizing mine workers](#) while fighting the anti-communist AFL, and attempts [to do more](#).

146 While some may object that Coolidge did not [directly charge](#) them, there is evidence that he: (1) "denied Sacco and Vanzetti a stay of execution [on the same day](#) he dedicated...Mt. Rushmore" and (2) [tacitly sanctioned](#) their deaths.



Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, and Frank B. Kellogg standing with signers of the Kellogg-Briand Pact in July 1929. Courtesy of [the Library of Congress](#).

In 1923-1924 a reparations plan for Germany, the so-called Dawes Plan, was worked out, chiefly by American monopolists, having as its fundamental object the reviving of German militarism as a force directed against the Soviet government, and the creation of conditions for the establishment of the practical control of foreign capital, especially American, over the German economy.¹⁴⁷ In 1924-1929 the influx of foreign capital into Germany exceeded ten to fifteen billion marks in long-term investments alone; American capital investments constituted 70 percent of the total of all long-term loans. The USA, together with France, proposed the conclusion of an international pact on the “renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy” called the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928.

The USA and other imperialist powers strove to turn the pact into a means of isolating the USSR; however, under the pressure of public opinion they were forced to invite the USSR to subscribe to the pact.¹⁴⁸

Aiming to maintain high profits for USA monopolies who were exploiting Latin American countries and to suppress the democratic forces of these countries, the Coolidge Administration continued military intervention in Haiti and likewise in Nicaragua where a liberation, anti-imperialist movement was spreading, and interfered in the internal affairs of Mexico and other Latin American republics. Striving to suppress the Chinese anti-imperialist and antifeudal revolution, the USA together with other imperialist powers carried out intervention in China.¹⁴⁹ USA warships participated in the bombardment of Nanking in March, 1927. The growing expansion of the USA led to the further aggravation of imperialist conflicts, especially Anglo-American and Japanese-American. In the 1920's Anglo-American oppositions became the principal conflicts within the capitalist world. A struggle for markets and for sources of raw materials, especially for oil, with the USA pressing England more and more, developed between the USA and England. In the middle of the twenties the export of capital from the USA was twice as large as the export of capital from England.

In the elections of 1928 the monopolist bourgeoisie sent to the office of President the candidate of the Republican Party, Herbert Hoover, President from 1929-1933. Hoover came into authority under the slogan of “prosperity.” However, the destructive economic crisis of 1929-1933 graphically proved the failure of the “theories” of “prosperity” and the “uniqueness” of the course of the development of American capitalism. The world crisis most forcefully struck the principal capitalistic country—the USA, which by that time had concentrated in its hands approximately half of the production and consumption of the capitalist world. The economic crisis gripped industry, agriculture, trade, and the credit system; it was extremely severe and

147 As Joseph Stalin [argued](#), “the Dawes Plan...was bound to strengthen the position of the bourgeoisie in Germany to some extent [but it] imposes a double yoke upon the German proletariat, the yoke of home and the yoke of foreign capital.”

148 This reality changes the situation from the rosy picture of the treaty painted by US peace activist David Swanson, in his book *When The World Outlawed War*, since this proves that the pact was only [one between capitalist powers](#).

149 One [US government document](#) notes that due to disorders starting in 1912, that for the protection of “U.S. interests” there were interventions off-and-on from 1912 to 1941, having 5,670 troops in China and 44 navy ships in Chinese waters in 1927, and having over three thousand men ashore in 1933. This included interventions in 1916 to quell a riot in Nanking, in 1917 in Chungking, 1920 in Kiukiang, landing five times from 1922 to 1923, landing after a nationalist attack in 1926, landing in Shanghai in 1927, landing to protect US interests in 1932, landing to protect the US consulate in 1934, 50,000 US marines sent to North China in 1945 to assist Chinese nationalists, and protecting the US embassy in 1948 and 1949.

protracted. The crisis fell as a terrible burden on the shoulders of the workers. During the years of the crisis, wages of workers fell 60 percent, and the income of farmers 59 percent. In 1932, according to official figures, there were 13,200,000 totally unemployed, a majority of whom did not receive any kind of assistance from the government.

The crisis led to the sharpening of the class struggle. The development of the workers' movement began in the country; the movement of the unemployed masses spread, being under the direct leadership of the Communist Party.¹⁵⁰ The Communist Party organized demonstrations of the unemployed on March 6, 1930, in many cities, in which 1,250,000 persons took part. A "hunger march" of the unemployed was carried out in Washington in 1931 with demands for the introduction of unemployment insurance and the distribution of benefits. In 1932 there was a march of unemployed war veterans in Washington. Troops under the command of General Douglas MacArthur dealt brutally with the participants of this march. During 1929-1934 more than 3,500,000 workers participated in strikes. In 1932 and 1933, with the assistance of the Communist Party, national conventions of farmers took place which decided on the necessity of a united struggle—with the workers—against the yoke of the monopolies. The protest of the farmers against low purchase prices expressed itself in a refusal to sell farm products to monopolistic companies.



Chicago "Hunger March" in 1930

Hoover's administration, helping large-scale capital, placed the whole burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the workers. It established a financial corporation with a capital of \$3,500,000,000, which was used for the subsidizing of monopolies with the object of saving them from collapse during the period of the crisis. At the same time the administration reinforced repressions against strikers. The so-called Scottsboro Affair, having begun in 1931, the authorities of the State of Alabama tried to arrange the execution, on false charges, of nine Negro youths. However, intimidations and repressions were not able to impede the growth of the struggle of the Negro people against reaction. The organization of the Negro peoples' masses grew. In 1936 in Chicago there was a convention of the progressive National Negro Congress, which delegates from 551 Negro organizations, uniting 3,300,000 persons, attended. During the period of office of Hoover's administration, USA expansion in the Latin American countries and in the Far East increased. After Japan began the usurpation of Manchuria in 1931, several American monopolies continued to furnish Japan with strategic materials and war supplies. Reviving the war-industry potential of Germany, whom the USA, England and France strove to set against the USSR, American monopolists took an active part in the drawing up in 1929 of the Young Plan.¹⁵¹

150 By 1934, the Communist Party of the United States [was only fifteen years old](#), but had absorbed revolutionary ferment from the working class of the United States, breaking with the opportunists of the SLP and starting to become a mass "political party of the working class" by working in labor unions and not under "orders" from anyone, especially not Moscow. Other sources [noted](#) that dominance of craft unions impeded the growth of organized labor in the United States but that the Communist Party organized the unemployed and other workers in effective actions, including "hunger marches."

151 As noted by the [US State Department](#), "in the autumn of 1928, [a]...committee of experts was formed, this one to devise a final settlement of the German reparations problem. In 1929, the committee, under the chairmanship of Owen D. Young, the head of General Electric...proposed a plan that reduced the total amount of reparations demanded of Germany to 121 billion gold marks...payable over 58 years. Another loan would be floated in foreign markets, this one totaling \$300 million.

In the presidential elections of 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the candidate of the Democratic Party, won. Roosevelt was subsequently elected three more times, in 1936, 1940, and 1944, and was President from 1933 to 1945.



1932 campaign button

After coming into office Roosevelt proclaimed the "New Deal," representing an attempt to overcome the crisis on the basis of "regulation" of private-capital activity, to strengthen the capitalistic system by strengthening government capitalism, and with the help of several concessions to the masses to keep them from revolutionary actions. Two acts, passed in 1933, underlay the "New Deal": The "National Industrial Recovery Act" (NIRA) and the "Agricultural Adjustment Act" (AAA). The NIRA established government regulation of industry, for which in various branches "fair practices codes" were introduced, fixing prices on products, fixing the level of production, regulating markets, establishing maximum working hours and minimum wages. The basic object of the codes consisted in mitigating the crisis by reducing production. A government administration, into which representatives of the large monopolies entered, was formed for the implementation of the NIRA. Having taken into their own hands the working-out of the "codes," the monopolists put into practice a policy of compulsory cartelizing, and reduced wages for workers. The profits of the monopolies increased sharply during the time of Roosevelt's presidency.

In practice, the National Labor Board established by Roosevelt guarded the interests of employers. The "Federal Emergency Relief Administration" attempted to solve the problem of unemployment by sending part of the unemployed to work camps for public works and by paying unemployment benefits. However, only a negligible part of the unemployed were occupied in public works, and only 20 percent of the unemployed were given the small benefits.¹⁵² At the same time, the government gave three billion dollars in aid to the banks. A law regulating agriculture was supposed to raise prices on agricultural products. With this object the government distributed subsidies to the farmers for reducing the area under grain crops and for reducing livestock.¹⁵³ The AAA was used with profit by the largest agricultural monopolies and market corporations, but, naturally, it could not prevent the mass ruin of the farmers.

In 1933 in the USA a slow rise in industrial production began, which, however, turned into its own depression. The attempt of Roosevelt's administration to overcome the depression and to prevent the approach of a new crisis with the help of the "New Deal" ended in failure.

In 1933-1935 the strike battle of the proletariat grew in strength. In 1933, 1,695 strikes took place; in 1934, 1,856 strikes; in 1935, 2,014 strikes. In the strikes about four million strikers in all participated. Strikes

Foreign supervision of German finances would cease and the last of the occupying troops would leave German soil...The advent of the Great Depression doomed the Young Plan from the start. Loans from U.S. banks had helped prop up the German economy until 1928; when these loans dried up, Germany's economy floundered. In 1931, as the world sunk ever deeper into depression, a one-year moratorium on all debt and reparation payments was declared at the behest of President Herbert Hoover; an effort to renew the moratorium the following year failed...By mid-1933, all European debtor nations except Finland had defaulted on their loans from the United States."

152 The CCC and other public works programs only were staffed by young, white men, since such organizations like the CCC as segregated organizations. However, still-existing public works are monuments to the work of these organizations.

153 The Farm Relief and Inflation Act, or Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, created the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) to manage farm subsidies to suffering farmers until the law was [ruled unconstitutional in 1936](#).

gripped the textile, steel, coal, automobile, and other branches of industry. In 1934 a strike of textile workers took place. The general strike in San Francisco in 1934 had an extraordinary range, enveloping all of the Western seaboard. The Communist Party, constantly fighting for the united action of the working class and the farmers, was the organizer of many militant rallies. The Communist Party promoted an active struggle against the threat of fascism and war. The Ninth Congress of the Party, in 1936, called for the organization of a united democratic front of workers, farmers, petty bourgeoisie, and Negroes.

The Communist Party had substantial influence in left-wing trade unions, advocating the reorganization of the AFL on an industrial basis. In 1935 the Congress of Industrial Organizations was formed, the CIO, existed until 1938 under the name of the Committee for Industrial Organization.¹⁵⁴ In 1936 the reactionary leadership of the AFL expelled from the federation, trade unions (with one million members) which had joined the Committee for Industrial Organization. However, left-wing elements did not succeed in heading the CIO, whose leadership was seized by right-wing trade union leaders-Lewis, Murray, Carey, and others.



May Day Parade in New York City (1934)

Under pressure of the workers, Roosevelt's administration made several concessions to the working class. In June, 1935, Congress passed the so-called Wagner Act, in which the right of workers to conclude collective agreements with employers was declared. At the same time this act stipulated compulsory arbitration, with the object of breaking strikes.¹⁵⁵

Under the conditions of a profound and lingering economic depression, the monopolies considered the majority of legislative enactments of the "New Deal" to be for themselves. When a transition to an economic revival began to appear, the attitude of the monopolies toward "planned" experiments changed sharply and they demanded their cancellation. As a result, the Supreme Court in 1935 and 1936 held the NIRA and AAA to be unconstitutional, which meant their abolition.¹⁵⁶

154 "[Communists were also very active](#) in the San Francisco General Strike of 1934, which laid the foundations for the left-led International Longshoreman and Warehouseman's Union (ILWU)...leftists were instrumental in the other 1934 mass strikes which were forerunners of the CIO drives... The period of roughly 1933-36 was an important transitional period for the American communist movement...the left had influence in the CIO national office, including publicity director Len DeCaux, legal counsel Lee Pressman...and some staff members of the CIO's Washington lobbying force...Many CIO local and state Industrial Union Councils were left-leaning."

155 The law strengthened organized unions and weakened company unions, and created the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The Supreme Court chipped away at it after it passed and was under sustained attack by business interests.

156 Under NIRA or the National Industrial Recovery Act, "businessmen in each industry could confer, without fear of antitrust prosecution, to draw up "codes" of fair business practices; the government would then enforce these codes as law. The codes established minimum wages, minimum prices in order to reverse the deflationary trend, and production quotas to insure fair competition. The law also contained a clause (Section 7a) which guaranteed labor's right to organize. Within a year it had become clear that the codes were being written by and for the largest corporations in each industry...Two weeks later the Supreme Court invalidated the NIRA, and Roosevelt, faced with the alternative of vetoing a pro-labor bill passed by his own supporters in Congress, reversed himself and came out for the Wagner bill as the replacement for Section 7a. The bill, which became the National Labor Relations Act, virtually outlawed company unions and rectified other evils in the earlier law."There were other social reforms during the New Deal such as Social Security, creation of the SEC, and so on, but they were all meant at maintaining capitalism.

The foreign policy of the Roosevelt Administration in a number of questions was carried out by somewhat different methods from the policies of former administrations. On November 16, 1933, the USA established diplomatic relations with the USSR. By this the most far-seeing American statesmen recognized that the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR corresponded to the interests of the USA.¹⁵⁷

In connection with the growth of the resistance of the peoples of Latin America to the expansion of the USA, Roosevelt proclaimed in 1933 the so-called "Good Neighbor Policy," which in actuality, however, served as a disguise for the old policy of intervention in the domestic affairs of the Latin American



Illustration of Two-faced Franco by Miguel Covarrubias. Courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#).

countries. Reactionary circles in the USA promoted the organization in Mexico of the rebellion of General Saturnino Cedillo against the lawful government of Lázaro Cárdenas in 1938.¹⁵⁸

In 1935 a neutrality act was passed in the USA giving the President the right to prohibit the export of arms to countries in a state of war. Declaring the lawful Republican government of Spain to be "belligerent," the government of the USA deprived it of the right to buy arms in the USA. At the same time, the USA increased the export of strategic materials and arms to Italy and Germany, who were carrying out armed intervention in Spain, from 1936 to 1939. The USA did not consider Italy and Germany as "belligerents." In this way the USA took advantage of the Neutrality Act for the actual support of Italian-German intervention in Spain.¹⁵⁹ In March, 1938, the government prohibited the departure of American volunteers to Republican Spain, and in April, 1939, the USA officially recognized the government of Francisco Franco. Progressive forces in the USA actively protested against the Neutrality Act, demanding that help be given to the Spanish Republican government and that sanctions be used against Germany and Italy. Many American anti-Fascists went to Spain, where they fought in the international brigades.

In 1937 a new, world economic crisis began which again struck the USA the most severely of all the capitalist countries. Sixty per cent of the workers' families earned wages equal to only 50 per cent of subsistence wages, total unemployment benefits were reduced from \$278,000,000 in 1936 to \$96,000,000 in 1937, and public works were curtailed. In 1937 the number of strikes doubled in comparison with 1936, 4,740 strikes took place, in which 1,860,000 persons participated. The Communist Party strove for the united action of the working masses of the USA, demanding that aid be rendered to the unemployed, and fighting against racial discrimination.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ This diplomatic recognition was extended in hopes of creating a new trading partner in the Soviet Union for the United States. In reality, this did not occur. However, such diplomatic recognition was better than hostility in the past.

¹⁵⁸ The "Good Neighbor Policy" was clearly an imperialist policy dressed up to be "democratic" and "friendly" as it tried to maintain the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, unify the hemisphere under the control of the United States, [exploiting](#) Latin American markets. Support of Cedillo's revolt would be understandable because Cárdenas made the Westerners mad when he nationalized Mexico's oil fields, which was supported by peasants and workers, along with some bourgeoisie.

¹⁵⁹ The neutrality of the United States was a sham, aligning [against](#) revolutionary forces, some big companies [sending arms](#) to Franco's forces ([Nationalists](#)), which [was victorious](#), while the USSR, Mexico, and citizens from international brigades, from across Western Europe, and some from Palestine, supported the [Spanish Republicans](#).

¹⁶⁰ After 1936, the Communist Party "[advocated](#) consultation and joint work with the Socialist Party, Farmer-Labor forces, and adherents to Labor's Non-Partisan League "on all those issues where united action is possible.""

In the 1930's the activities of a number of reactionary organizations in the USA became more energetic: the Ku Klux Klan, the American Legion, formed in 1919, and others.

In the prewar years the so-called isolationists played an important role in the conduct of the USA's foreign policy. Under the pretense of giving up intervention in the affairs of Europe, Asia, and Africa, the isolationists, representing in those years the most reactionary circles of the American bourgeoisie, in fact supported Fascist aggression.¹⁶¹ The USA refused to support the proposals of the USSR directed toward the execution of a policy of collective security, toward a struggle for the preservation of peace, and against Fascist aggression. The USA facilitated the Munich Pact of England and France with Hitlerian Germany and Fascist Italy. Thus, the diplomatic representatives of the USA shortly before the conclusion of the Munich Pact carried on talks with the representatives of the ruling circles of Hitler's Germany, England, and France, from which it was obvious that the USA was not opposed to Hitler's aggression in the East. The USA's ambassador to Germany, Hugh R. Wilson, went to Prague in August, 1938, with the object of inducing the Czechoslovakian government to compromise with Hitler's Germany and ended up attending a Nuremberg rally that same year. The USA approved the negotiations of Neville Chamberlain with Adolf Hitler in Berchtesgaden and Bad Godesberg in September, 1938. The policy of the USA, like the policy of England and France, helped unleash the Second World War, 1939-1945.¹⁶²



Soviet propaganda poster in 1930 saying "In God's country, that is, the United States of America." Courtesy of [Soviet Visuals](#).

The USA during the period of the Second World War, 1939-1945

Remaining formally a non-belligerent, the USA had already, with the very beginning of the war, come forward on the side of England and France. In November 1939, Congress revised the Neutrality Act, allowing the sale of arms to the belligerents, which in practice meant authorization to export arms to England and France. In the period of the Russo-Finnish War, 1939-1940, the government of the USA placed a "moral embargo" in 1939 on the export of goods to the Soviet Union, and gave the Finnish government a loan of ten million dollars. At the same time in the USA itself, persecution of the Communists and of all progressives increased. In 1940 Congress passed the Smith Act, which subsequently was, in fact, used against progressive forces.

161 While Hitler [had "considerable respect"](#) for the industrial power of the United States and its people's capacity for work," US newspapers praised him in his early days of power in 1933, taking their cue from the US government which ignored the plight of Jews until the later 1930s, and [other supporters](#) of Hitler (such as [Henry Ford](#), [Charles Lindbergh](#), [William Randolph Hearst](#), [Joseph Kennedy](#) (JFK's father), [Prescott Bush](#), [Standard Oil](#), [DuPont](#), [General Motors](#), [IBM](#), [Ford](#), [Kodak](#), and Chase Manhattan Bank [perhaps](#), along with [other companies](#)) (see Medoff, "The American Papers that Praised Hitler" and Broich, "How the American Press Normalized Mussolini and Hitler" for example).

162 As Ted Grant [argued](#), the "capitalist rulers of Britain, France and the United States fearing the Socialist revolution in Germany, also supported Hitler financially and in other ways before he came to power. They supported the re-armament of Germany and her initial seizures of territory, as a basis for using her for war against Russia. They were just as responsible for the Nazis coming to power as the German capitalists."

After the crushing defeat of France, in June 1940, the USA, preparing to enter the war, began carrying out a vast program of armament. In September, 1940, a law was passed for universal military service. The USA gave help to England in the fight against Germany. During the summer of 1940 it sold 1,000,000 rifles, 84,000 machine guns, and 2,500 pieces of ordnance to England. In March, 1941, the Lend-Lease Act was passed in the USA, allowing a substantial increase in the export of arms and war materials (mainly to England). But at the same time as it supported England against Germany, the USA tried to take advantage of England's difficulty to establish American control over several English possessions and spheres of influence. According to an agreement of 1940, finally drawn up in the form of a contract, March 27, 1941, the USA received from England, in exchange for fifty old destroyers, ninety-nine-year leases on territory for the establishment of a system of American naval and air bases in a series of strategically important points on the Atlantic. Subsequently in the course of the war the USA concluded a number of other agreements with England, aimed at establishing her financial-economic dependence on the USA.¹⁶³



Anti-Nazi propaganda poster from Soviet Union (1941)

In July, 1940, the USA achieved the recognition, at an inter-American conference, of the so-called Act of Havana, which permitted "any American country" to occupy any European possession in the Western Hemisphere, if it thought that this possession might be seized by one European power from another. In April 1941, the USA established military control over Greenland, and in November 1941, over Dutch Guiana.

On June 22, 1941, Hitler's Germany treacherously attacked the Soviet Union. Repelling the attack of the aggressor, the USSR entered the war. The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945, began. The USSR

took upon itself the main attack on Fascist Germany. The Soviet-German front became the decisive front of the Second World War. A powerful anti-Hitler coalition headed by the Soviet Union, the USA, and Great Britain was formed, which joined into a united camp, setting for itself the object of crushing Hitler's Germany. The formation of the anti-Hitler coalition answered to the interests of all freedom-loving peoples.

The conflicts between the USA and Germany by this time were extremely acute. The USA came into conflict with Germany in the fight for the division of spheres of influence, colonies, and sources of raw materials. American capitalists were especially worried by the strengthening of the economic and political positions of Germany in Latin America. Together with this, the ruling circles of the USA and England could not leave out of account the desire of broad masses of their countries for close co-operation with the Soviet Union for a successful fight against Hitler's Germany.¹⁶⁴ On June 24 Roosevelt's government announced the support of the Soviet Union by the United States of America. On July 30 the personal representative of the President of the USA, Henry Hopkins, arrived in Moscow, and on August 2 there was an exchange of notes between the USSR and the USA extending a working trade agreement for one year. On August 14 the Atlantic Charter was signed—a declaration of the governments of the USA and England regarding the war.

163 Before the [lend-lease act](#) of 1940, the US began supplying the British to combat Hitler and his Nazi armies, [in 1939](#), traded [destroyers for bases](#), before becoming directly involved in December 1941.

164 Undoubtedly broad masses in the US and UK, wanted to work with USSR to defeat Hitler. As the US State Department [noted](#), "although relations between the Soviet Union and the United States had been strained in the years before World War II, the U.S.-Soviet alliance of 1941–1945 was marked by a great degree of cooperation and was essential to securing the defeat of Nazi Germany. Without the remarkable efforts of the Soviet Union on the Eastern Front, the United States and Great Britain would have been hard pressed to score a decisive military victory over Nazi Germany...The most important factor in swaying the Soviets [to ally] with the United States was the Nazi decision" to invade the USSR.

From September 29 to October 1, 1941, there was a meeting of the representatives of the USSR, the USA, and England in Moscow, at which a decision was made on expanding the delivery of arms, equipment, and food supplies to the Soviet Union, and on delivery by the Soviet Union of materials for England and the USA.

The military co-operation of the USSR, the USA, and England, which was established despite the differences in the economic and political systems of the countries entering into the anti-Hitler coalition, was extremely important in winning the victory over the bloc of fascist aggressors in the Second World War. The anti-Hitler coalition was a mighty union of freedom-loving peoples. The sympathy of wide masses of the American people increased more and more toward the Soviet people, who themselves carried the burden of the war with Hitler's Germany.



Side by side with the sharpening of the relations of the USA with Germany, the relations between the USA and Japan continued to grow worse. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the Pacific possessions and bases of the USA and England. American bases in the Pacific, in Pearl Harbor, and in the Philippine Islands, on Guam and Wake Island, were subjected to attack. The American Navy suffered losses even in the first hours of the war. On December 8, 1941, the USA declared war on Japan. On December 11, 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the USA. In June, 1942, the USA declared war on Bulgaria, Hungary, and Rumania. Thus the USA found itself in a state of war with Japan, and Germany and her associates, except for Finland.

On June 11, 1942, a Soviet-American agreement was signed in Washington on the principle of mutual aid in conducting the war against the aggressor. In an Anglo-Soviet communique on a visit by V. M. Molotov, and a Soviet-American communique on the visit by V. M. Molotov to Washington, published June 12, 1942, in Moscow, London, and Washington, it was pointed out that at the negotiations "a full understanding was reached in regard to the urgent problems of the formation of a Second Front in Europe in the year 1942." Already by the summer of 1942 in England and Canada more than four million persons were in the army and in the USA more than two million; however, the Second Front was not opened either in 1942 or 1943.

Reactionary circles in the USA and England were not interested in the rapid conclusion of the war.¹⁶⁵ They wanted the mutual weakening of the USSR and Germany.

165 Western allies didn't want a quick end to the war since a real Western Front was not created until June 1944. As the US State Department [even admitted](#), "in 1942, Roosevelt unwisely promised the Soviets that the Allies would open the second front that autumn. Although Stalin only grumbled when the invasion was postponed until 1943, he exploded the following year when the invasion was postponed again until May of 1944. In retaliation, Stalin recalled his ambassadors from London and Washington...In spite of these differences...defeat of Nazi Germany was a joint endeavor...Militarily, the Soviets fought valiantly and suffered staggering casualties on the Eastern Front. When Great Britain and the United States finally invaded northern France in 1944, the Allies were finally able to drain Nazi Germany of its strength."

In November, 1942, the USA and England carried out an invasion of North Africa, and in 1943, into Italy. In Pacific Theater of war, the USA began active offensive operations against Japan in 1943.



Capitalists of the World, Unite! by Victor Deni.

During the period of the war the USA concentrated its armed forces in different regions of the globe important in regard to the economic, political, and military situation and important for the development of the sphere of influence of the USA. American bases were set up in Canada, Iceland, Greenland, and North Africa. The Second Front was not opened until 1944, when it became clear that the USSR was in a position to occupy Germany with its own forces and free Europe from the fascist yoke. In June, 1944, Anglo-American armed forces carried out a wide forced crossing of the English Channel and a massive landing of troops in North France, and, under the supreme command of the American Army General, D. Eisenhower, unleashed offensive operations against Hitler's troops. However, even after the opening of the Second Front, the main front of the war remained the Eastern Soviet-German Front, in which approximately 200 German divisions were concentrated since Germany kept only seventy-five divisions in the West. During the period of the war, several American monopolies encouraged ties with German monopolies, and a number of channels remained by which strategic materials found their way into Germany across Spain and Portugal.

During the time of the war the acuteness of the imperialistic conflict between the USA and England remained. The USA took advantage of England's difficulties for a widespread attack on England's positions; the USA was seeking to weaken the British colonial empire and to subordinate English colonial possessions to its own influence. In exchange for the delivery of arms from the USA, England found itself compelled to turn over to it part of its capital investments in the USA, in Latin American countries, and in Canada. In Canada the capital investments of the USA increased from \$4,151,000,000 in 1939 to \$5,157,000,000 in 1947, and English capital investments decreased in that same period from \$2,476,000,000 to \$1,668,000,000. Thus, even in the time after the war the political influence of the USA in Canada grew.

The USA took advantage of the war situation to push its expansion in Latin America. An overwhelming share of the export and import of the Latin American countries fell, in particular, into the hands of American monopolists. Having forced German and Japanese monopolies out of Latin America, the USA in the same way pushed out its English associates.¹⁶⁶ England's specific share of the imports of the Latin American countries fell from 11.7 per cent in 1938 to 3.6 per cent in 1944. A conference of the ministers of foreign affairs of the American countries, which took place in January, 1942, in Rio de Janeiro, created an inter-American committee for defense based in Washington, and sanctioned assisting the USA in building bases in Latin America.

¹⁶⁶ There were obvious imperialistic benefits of World War II, as it put the United States in a position to dominate the world, benefited the US capitalist class, and created conditions for "controlling" the situation at home (Zinn, *A People's History*). Ultimately, such imperialist goals of world domination, and ultimately a "Cold War," would have been impossible and unrealistic if the British had not been pushed to the sidelines as their empire declined.

During the period of the war with Hitler's Germany, the USA participated in a conference of the heads of state of the big three powers in Teheran, from November 28 to December 1, 1943, and in Yalta in February, 1945. After the crushing of Hitler's Germany and the signing of the statement of unconditional surrender, the Berlin Conference of 1945 of the chiefs of state of the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain took place in Potsdam, near Berlin. In these conferences united decisions on the most important questions concerning the conduct of the war and the postwar organization of the world were reached by the three states. On July 26 the Potsdam Declaration of 1945, containing demands for the unconditional surrender of Japan, was signed by the chiefs of state of three powers—England, the USA, and China. But this demand was refused by the Japanese government. By this time the USA had achieved substantial successes in the war in the Pacific Ocean during the Pacific Ocean Campaign, 1939-1945. In 1944 the USA had already taken possession of the Marshall and Marianas Islands; in 1945 American armed forces occupied the Philippines, seized by Japan in 1942, and took the Japanese island of Okinawa. Japanese military targets were subjected to heavy air bombardment. The USA achieved supremacy on the sea and in the air in the war with Japan.



US 13th infantry armed corp with Soviet troops under Lt. Gen. Oslikovosko at historic meeting on the Elbe River (May 1945)

In the beginning of August, 1945, American atom bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9, which entailed the destruction of many thousands of noncombatant residents.¹⁶⁷ The use of the atom bomb by the USA, in the opinion of many representatives of peaceable communities, was not called for by military necessity and had chiefly political objects.¹⁶⁸

After the USSR entered the war with Japan on August 8, 1945, in accordance with having assumed this responsibility, and after the destruction of principal Japanese land forces by the Soviet Army, Japan surrendered with the statement of unconditional surrender signed September 2, 1945.¹⁶⁹ American

167 This was only part of the story. Bourgeois historians Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns, who passed off condemnation of the atomic bombing and accepted, like most deluded historians that it “shortened” the war, declared that in July 1945, US aircraft bombed 66 Japanese cities, mainly engaging in [firebombing](#), which killed “at least 300,000 Japanese civilians, injuring 1.3 million, and leaving 8 million more without homes” (*The War: An Intimate History 1941-1945*).

168 While some may balk at this explanation, it is undoubtedly correct. Over a hundred thousand people had been killed by the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, which set off a firestorm and left thousands of survivors, called Hibakusha in Japanese, hurt or killed by the ensuing radiation (John Hershey, *Hiroshima*). As for the bomb in Nagasaki, 20,000 were killed by the bomb blast, and at least 35,000 were hurt by radiation burns, along with about 18,000 homes destroyed (George Weller, *First Into Nagasaki*). Masculinity was not only reinforced among the scientists who created the bombs but the atomic bombing itself was condemned by Roman Catholic leaders like the Pope, Quaker pacifists, socialist leader Norman Thomas, numerous Congressmembers, socialist author H.G. Wells, and numerous scientists like Albert Einstein (Easlea, *Fathering the Unthinkable* and Lawrence Wittner, *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941-1960*).

169 The Soviets had agreed secretly, with the Allies, to enter the war with Japan at this point. Some argue, like Gar Alperovitz in *Atomic Diplomacy* and P.M.S. Blackett in *Fear, War, and the Bomb* that atomic bombs were dropped in August to prevent the Soviets from occupying Japan. If such occupation had occurred, the politics of Japan would undoubtedly be very different than they are today.

capitalists, especially large monopolies, received huge profits during the war. At the beginning of the war the monopolies did not make arrangements to expand the production of war materials until they secured terms particularly profitable for themselves-large tax privileges and guarantees of high profits. In view of this, a substantial number of war enterprises were set up by the government at the expense of the federal budget. During the years of the war new businesses and new equipment, to the sum of \$25,000,000,000, were put into operation. Of these the largest part was created directly at the expense of the government. The



"Capital" by Victor Deni (1919), says at bottom "Anyone who tears down this poster or covers it up is performing a counter-revolutionary act."

enterprises set up by the government were given over to exploitation by the large monopolies, and after the war they were sold to them at advantageous prices. The principal war orders, up to 70 percent, came from the large monopolies. During the war the concentration of industry increased. In 1945 in the USA approximately the same amount of resources belonged to 250 of the largest corporations as had belonged to all the corporations in 1939. The profits of the monopolies increased sharply. In the period from 1939 to 1945 the total sum of the net profits of American capitalists reached approximately \$60,000,000,000, as compared with \$14,000,000,000 in the prewar period, 1931-1938.

From 1939 to 1944 the total volume of nonagricultural products doubled. The production capacity of industry increased approximately 40 per cent. The number of unemployed in 1944 was reduced by 700,000. The substantial growth in manufacture in the USA during the time of the war was possible, in part, thanks to the fact that the war activities were not carried on in the territory of the USA, and American cities did not undergo bombardment. However, the market created by the war situation could not insure a stable commodity market. Even in the period of the maximum development of war industry, production capacities were not kept running at full power. In 1943 industrial output reached its peak, after which its decline began. The gap between the productive capacity of industry and the purchasing power of American workers grew larger and larger.

In the war situation direct and indirect taxes were increased and inflation grew. All of this led to the reduction of the real wages of the workers. Employers violated collective agreements.¹⁷⁰

The American people made an important contribution in the matter of the struggle of freedom-loving peoples against fascistic aggression. Striving to help in the victory over the enemy, the workers of the USA by their strenuous labor contributed to the increase in production of war products. In the years of the war the organization of the working class of the USA grew. The number of members of trade unions in 1941 was about ten million, in 1944, over fourteen million. The Communist Party in the USA urged the workers to spare no efforts to achieve a victory over fascistic states. The Communist Party demanded from the government of the USA the fulfillment of its obligations in opening the Second Front.

170 Along with the no strike pledge during the war, which the Communist Party, under the control of Earl Browder, had endorsed, the working class was supported by a government that was working to assist "economic royalists," the capitalist class, during the war, and not improve the lot of the workers of the United States.

During the years of the Second World War the Communist Party carried on a struggle with Browderism. Earl Browder, who had elbowed his way into the leadership of the Communist Party, together with his henchmen attempted in 1944 to abolish the Communist Party under the guise of "reorganizing" it into a Communist Political Association. The main part of the Communists, headed by W. Foster and E. Dennis, remained faithful to the cause of the working class and succeeded in July, 1945, in calling a special convention in which a decision was made on the restoration of the Communist Party. Browder was expelled from the Party.¹⁷¹

In November, 1944, the regular presidential elections were held. Franklin Roosevelt was elected President, for the fourth time. The broad masses of voters cast their ballots for Roosevelt in large measure because he declared the necessity of carrying on the struggle for the quickest possible victory over fascist aggressors.

The USA after the Second World War

As a result of the Second World War, Germany and Japan were put out of action as competitors of the USA. The USA was the only capitalist country to come out of the war with strengthened economic and military positions. However, after the end of the war, the USA ran into great difficulties. In connection with the stopping of war orders there was a decline in industrial production. In 1945, in the USA as a whole, industrial production was reduced by approximately 15 percent; the output of the manufacturing industry by 17 per cent in comparison with 1943; and construction by more than 66 percent in comparison with 1942. In connection with the sharp reduction of deliveries under Lend-Lease, exports fell to \$9,800,000,000 in 1945 as compared with \$14,400,000,000 in 1944. Unemployment increased. Speculation increased and inflation grew.

In 1945-1946 large-scale strikes occurred, particularly of steelworkers and workers in the automobile industry. The cooperation of white and Negro workers grew closer. In the postwar years nearly 1,500,000 Negro workers were organized into trade unions.

With the purpose of maintaining the huge wartime profits, American monopolies tried to insure a high standard of production, which in its turn rested on the problems of a fight for new foreign markets, for supremacy in the world market for raw materials, and of the increase in export goods and capital.



Bob Minor addressing the Michigan Communist party in Spring 1942 in Detroit. Courtesy of [the Library of Congress](#).

¹⁷¹ In the mid-1930s, Browder [had published](#) a publication titled "What is Communism" and another titled "The People's Front" in 1938. In 1935, he interpreted the split in the AFL as about fear of individual unionism, leading to an uncritical alliance with the CIO in order to "fight fascism." This "rightward shift" of Browderism, as it was called, engaged in efforts to promote CIO unity, that improvement of conditions under capitalism would set groundwork for socialism, support for progressive democrats in 1937 rather than staying independent of the capitalist two-party system. All of these aspects leading to a loss of Communist Party leadership, subordinating class struggle to the war effort including favoring a permanent draft, and ruling out the idea of a "Cold War" as nonsensical which underestimated the power of European and American imperialism to impose on the Third World, failure to understand corporate liberalism, and revisionism that would only rear its ugly head after 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev would fully take an anti-Stalin line. Still, the Soviets received him warmly even as communist parties across the world rejected the revisionist aspects of Browderism.

In order to maintain high profits in the situation of a decline in the purchasing power of the people, American monopolies began to speed up the export of commodities in every possible way, making maximum use for this of the postwar situation in war-ravaged countries. With the help of a number of measures, American capitalists achieved some increase in the production level. However, by the end of 1948 exports had already declined from \$15,400,000,000 in 1947 to \$12,700,000,000 in 1948; a decline in industrial production began. With the end of 1948 an economic crisis began to develop in the USA, which was checked by the increasingly intense armaments race in connection with the Korean War. Imperialist circles in the USA looked for a way out of the mounting difficulties by further development of foreign policy expansion, which involved a reversion to production of war metals, an armaments race, a return to the system of military deliveries, and vast government appropriations for war manufactures. In the period 1946-1953 the total sum of military expenditures



NATO figure yells about the "Soviet threat." Soviet propaganda poster of an unknown date.

by the USA, including expenditures for arms for member-countries of the North Atlantic bloc, were almost \$250,000,000,000. After the Second World War the role of the National Association of Manufacturers in the political life of the country expanded even more. Monopolies, subordinating government apparatus to themselves even more, had a definite influence in both the domestic and foreign policy of the USA. On April 12, 1945, the President of the USA, Franklin Roosevelt, died and the Vice-President, Harry Truman, took the office of President. The influence of reactionary circles gained strength in the government of the USA. After the end of the Second World War the USA abandoned the concerted policy followed by the participants in the anti-Hitler coalition during the years of the war, rejected co-operation with the USSR and launched the "Cold War" against it.¹⁷²

In the postwar period the USA openly advanced its pretensions to "world leadership." Its course, aimed at the establishment of world supremacy of American monopolies and at the preparation of a war against the countries of the Socialist camp, was known as a policy "from a position of strength."¹⁷³

The USA secured a large number of military bases on the territory of other states in England, France, West Germany, and a number of other European countries, in many Latin American countries, in Asia, Oceania, and Africa. Immediately after the end of the war, the USA began to pursue a policy of remilitarizing the western part of Germany. In China, the faction of Chiang Kai-shek, supported by American aid, unleashed a civil war in an attempt to crush the democratic forces of the country. The USA set up bases in China and kept its troops on Chinese territory. Fortifying their position in China, American imperialist circles concealed the conclusion of various kinds of inequitable treaties and agreements with the Chinese government, as for example, a Chinese-American "friendship, trade and navigation agreement" in 1946, and a Chinese-American agreement for economic aid in 1947. The total amount of loans and the other kinds of material aid given to Chiang Kai-shek's government by the USA reached six billion dollars in 1949.

¹⁷² The Dulles Brothers, who had funneled funds to the Nazis during the war, [saved high ranking SS officers](#) after the war, 1,000 of whom were used by the CIA as secret and anti-Soviet assets (Adam LeBor, "Overt and Covert," Lichtblau, "Nazis were given 'safe haven' in U.S., report says," Lichtblau, "in Cold War, U.S. spy agencies used 1,000 Nazis").

¹⁷³ Such a combative position was obviously meant to assist in the growth of US imperialism and opposition to anything that opposed the Western capitalist order even if it was only moderate in its character.

In March, 1947, in President Truman's message to Congress the so-called Truman Doctrine, expansionist in essence, was formulated. Systematically intervening in the affairs of Latin American countries, reactionary circles in the USA encouraged the organization of revolutions in a number of Latin American countries: in Bolivia in 1946, in Venezuela in 1948, and others. In October, 1950, the USA obtained approval of the Inter-American Agreement for Mutual Aid, put into effect in 1948. The USA supported the Netherlands' war against the people of Indonesia, 1945-1948. In 1947 the USA concluded a military agreement with Iran, establishing the virtual control of American advisers over the Iranian Army. The USA gave help to France while it carried on a war against the peoples of Indochina.¹⁷⁴



Undated cartoon criticizes effects of HUAC.

the Democratic and Republican parties. The Progressive Party, created in 1948, united mainly the representatives of progressive intelligentsia and several strata of the bourgeoisie and farmers, entered the elections side by side with the two parties of monopolistic capital—the Democratic and Republican parties. The Party advanced a program of a fight for peace and for democratic rights of the American people.

In 1949 legal proceedings were instituted against eleven leaders of the Communist Party of the USA, who were sentenced to long-term imprisonments. Following that, a series of new legal processes were organized against figures of the USA Communist Party. Investigations of all progressive figures grew more intense. Reformist trade union leaders supported the policy of militarizing the country and of attacking progressive forces. The leaders of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, or CIO, introduced, at the convention of the CIO in 1949, a resolution approving the entire policy of the ruling circles of the USA. In 1949-1950 a

In the USA itself, repressions against the workers' movement and progressive organizations were gaining in strength.¹⁷⁵ In 1947 the Congress of the USA passed the antiworker Taft-Hartley Act, directed against strikes and depriving the trade unions of many rights. In the same year Truman's order for "proof of loyalty" of government workers was put into effect. On the basis of this order, democratic elements from governmental staffs were dismissed. Various committees of the American Congress widely expanded their activities of investigation, especially the "Committee for the Investigation of Un-American Activities." This committee prosecuted a great number of progressive journalists, motion picture figures, with the investigation of "subversive" activities in Hollywood beginning in 1947, and trade-union workers.¹⁷⁶ Numerous reactionary organizations—the Ku Klux Klan, the American Legion, and others put new life into their activities.

In 1948 the presidential elections took place. Truman, the candidate of the Democratic Party, was elected President. The Truman Administration rested on a so-called two-party bloc of

174 While some bourgeois scholar may say this is unfair and that the US "helped" colonized peoples, this is hogwash. This perspective of US foreign policy is one that is also held by progressive scholars, even anti-communist ones, who criticize US foreign policy in the aftermath of World War II, such as Stephen Kinzer and Noam Chomsky.

175 It is possible that this was the case. However, such a resurgence did not last long because the US government engaged in an anti-communist quest, another "Red Scare" along with other reactionary organizations and individuals who wanted to preserve "real" Americanism from the "commies" and the "ruskies," creating fear among the population.

176 The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), along with other measures, was lampooned in Charlie Chaplin's film, *A King in New York*, produced after Chaplin was exiled from the US because of his "leftist" sympathies.

number of progressive trade unions, with nearly one million members, were expelled from the CIO. In 1949 the CIO left the World Federation of Trade Unions.

Using the "Marshall Plan" adopted in 1948, the USA consolidated its control over the economies and politics of a number of Western European countries. The USA, together with England and France, pursued a policy directed at deepening the division of Germany. In 1949 the aggressive, military North Atlantic bloc was formed.



Sellers of Communist Party paper, Daily Worker, protest Korean War (June 1950).

In June of 1950 the USA intervened in the civil war in Korea and after that introduced into the United Nations a resolution for the participation of states-members of the UN—in the Korean War. However, the governments of several capitalistic countries, having committed themselves to help the USA in Korea, were forced by the pressure of public opinion to limit themselves to basically negligible participation in the Korean War.¹⁷⁷ American armed forces, principally, carried on the Korean War. Reactionary circles in the USA did not wish to reconcile themselves to the failure of their plans in China which had followed as a result of the victory of the Chinese peoples' revolution in 1949 and the crushing of the troops of Chiang Kai-shek.¹⁷⁸ In June, 1950, the American Navy encroached upon Chinese territorial waters off the island of Taiwan, and following this, American armed forces virtually occupied Taiwan.

In December, 1950, Truman's administration declared a "state of emergency" in connection with the Korean War. The number of American armed forces substantially increasing, American monopolies took advantage of the war in Korea to make huge new profits. The profits of capitalists grew from \$27,100,000,000 in 1949 to \$42,900,000,000 in 1951. American monopolies again began to get tax privileges for the development of war industry. Side by side with this, even within a year and a half after the start of the Korean War, taxes on individuals increased more than \$16,000,000,000.

A temporary increase in industrial production was observed in connection with the Korean War. Wide-scale deliveries of American arms to other countries, on the basis of the so-called "Mutual Security Guarantee" Act passed by the USA Congress in 1951, also contributed to this. In accordance with this act \$100,000,000 was appropriated to finance undermining activities against the countries of the democratic camp.

The military draft, nearly one million men in 1951 alone, and the development of war production could not prevent the growth of unemployment, which had appeared as a result of the reduction of branches of civilian production. In 1952, despite the increase in war production, there were no less than three million totally unemployed. Besides this, there was a great number of partially unemployed. In 1953, the net income of farmers of the USA, in comparison with the average income of 1946-1948, declined 35 percent.

177 The Korean War was officially meant as a way of defending South Korea from invaders, but was officially meant as a way to "spread democracy" and fight communism. However, this propaganda was not very effective as soldiers in the US armed forces didn't know what they were fighting for while North Koreans and Chinese forces knew what they were fighting for: against the destructive Western capitalist order (David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter*).

178 There is no doubt of this. Even Howard Zinn, who has anti-communist diatribes, admitted, that the communist revolution, once in power, was "the closest thing, in the long history of that ancient country, to a people's government, independent of outside control." Possibly US elites felt the same way, so they were afraid of China's possible influence.

In the postwar period in the USA, a number of antidemocratic laws were passed. In addition to the antiworker Taft-Hartley Act passed in 1947, the McCarran-Wood Act, directed against the Communist Party and all democratic organizations, was passed in 1950. This act provided for the use of a number of restrictive and repressive measures against the Communist Party and also against persons suspected of contact with Communists or of sympathy for them. The McCarran-Walter immigration and naturalization act, directed against progressives—in the first instance against progressive elements among immigrants—was passed in 1952.

The policy of segregation and racial discrimination against Negroes continued; a number of legal actions against Negroes were organized. Thus, in 1949 in Martinsville, occurred the trials of seven Negroes, who were falsely accused of the rape of a white woman and who were sentenced to death and executed in February, 1951.¹⁷⁹

Progressive forces, and most of all the working class of the USA, came forward in defense of their rights. In 1950 there were 4,843 strikes with a total participation of 2,810,000 persons; in 1951 there were 4,737 strikes in which 2,220,000 persons participated; in 1952 there were 5,117 strikes with 3,540,000 persons striking. In March, 1949, in New York there was a convention of cultural workers in defense of peace. By November 1, 1950, two million Americans had signed the Stockholm Appeal to ban atomic weapons. During the period of the war in Korea a movement sprang up under the slogan, "Hands Off Korea!" New organizations of supporters of peace began to spring up: the Information Center of the Supporters of Peace, formed in 1950; the "National Committee of the American Trade Union Convention in Defense of Peace;" the organization of the "March of Americans for Peace;" and others. A number of farmers' organizations came forward in defense of peace, the conventions of farmers of Iowa in 1951, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and others. During the summer of 1951 there was a Peoples' Congress in defense of peace, in which 5,000 delegates participated. The convention elected a National Committee to lead the peace movement. The Negro people took an active part in the struggle for peace. The group of American Quakers came forward in support of peace. However, the peace movement in the USA was weaker than in many other countries.¹⁸⁰

As early as 1951 the USA by a one-sided act broke off the existence of trade relations between the USA and USSR. Following that, the Congress of the USA passed a law (the so-called Battle Act) whose aim was to compel countries receiving American aid to discontinue trade with the USSR, the Chinese Peoples' Republic, and the European countries of peoples' democracies.



朝鮮人民軍中國人民志願軍勝利萬歲!
Propaganda poster in 1951 celebrates victory over the United States by the people's armies of Korea and China.

179 Such lynching occurred even as some conditions seemed to "improve." In the long view, from 1882 to 1968, [3,446 black Americans](#) were lynched. Specifically, from 1940 to 1951, thirty-three blacks [were lynched](#), most of whom were killed in the American south, according to [a database](#) on the subject.

180 While anti-communist scare tactics were rampant in the United States, which received mass support of the population, the peace movement gained a new energy by working to defend civil liberties even as the movement was under attack (Wittner, *Rebels Against War*). From 1950 to 1956, the movement seemed weak and had a hard time establishing its voice.

In September, 1951, simultaneously with the signing of the San Francisco separate peace treaty with Japan, the USA concluded a military treaty with Japan, a so-called "security pact", according to which the USA received the right to keep its armed forces in and around Japan for an indefinite time.

Even in August, 1951, the USA had signed a pact for "mutual defense" with the Philippines. In September, 1953, the USA concluded an agreement with Spain for the establishment of American military bases on Spanish territory. In March, 1954, an American-Japanese agreement for "help in safeguarding mutual defense" was concluded. The penetration of American monopolies into the colonies and "spheres of influence" of Western European countries grew deeper. For the penetration into colonial and dependent countries, American monopolies made wide use of agreements signed in accordance with the so-called Point Four Truman program declared in 1949. In the post-war period the intervention of the USA into the affairs of Latin American countries increased. In 1952 reactionary circles in the USA encouraged the organization of a military coup d'etat in Cuba.



Mohammed Mossadegh's supporters and Tudeh members denounce Britain and US (Tehran, July 1953)

The expansionist policy of the USA led to the aggravation of opposition among imperialist countries, the chief of which was the conflict between the USA and England. The struggle sharpened between the USA and England for control of English colonies and dominions. The USA has military bases in Canadian territory and keeps soldiers there. In September, 1951, the USA concluded a "mutual defense" pact with Australia and New Zealand, without participation by England. American capital took even deeper root in French, Belgian, and Portuguese colonial possessions. During the postwar years the penetration of American monopolies into the countries of Southeast Asia increased.

The USA waged an attack on the still-remaining English positions in Latin America. With the aid of an international petroleum consortium formed in 1954, American monopolies took control of a large part of Iranian oil which formerly belonged to English capital.¹⁸¹ Conflicts of the USA with other capitalistic countries sharpened still more in connection with the increasing competition of West Germany and Japan, in Latin America and other areas.¹⁸²

In the presidential elections which took place in 1952, the Progressive Party advanced B. Hallinan as its candidate for President. The Communist Party and other progressive organizations of the USA came forward in support of him. A. Stevenson was the candidate of the Democratic Party and General Dwight D. Eisenhower, whom a majority of the largest USA monopolies supported, was the candidate of the

181 It was not the [proposed cartel](#) of multiple companies [caught](#) by the FTC but it was an agreement signed after the coup in 1953 which installed the Shah in Iran and kicked out Iranian nationalist Mohammed Mossadegh, who nationalized Iran's oil, out of power. The agreement [created the Iranian Oil Participants Ltd](#) (IOP) which included British Petroleum (40%), Royal Dutch Shell (14%), Standard Oil of California (later Chevron) (8%), Standard Oil of New Jersey (later Exxon) (8%), Standard Oil of New York (later Mobil, then ExxonMobil), Texaco (8%), and Gulf Oil (8%). This group of seven countries, became the "Consortium for Iran cartel" dominated the global oil industry from 1945 until the 1970s.

182 Naturally there is competition between capitalist states, with the [rise in revenues \(and profits\)](#) of US corporations, among other factors The United States, naturally, had a plan, concocted with British intelligence, to ravage Middle Eastern oil fields if the Soviets tried to take the oil, a plan on the table from 1948 until at least 1956, [coming in different stages](#).

Republican Party. Eisenhower, who had promised during his pre-election campaign to halt the Korean War, was elected President. Representatives of the largest monopolies occupied the most important posts in the administration. The 83rd Congress of the USA passed a number of laws in 1953-1954 transferring to the monopolies a substantial number of enterprises set up at the expense of the government budget. According to a coastal tidelands law, signed in 1953, the offshore oil deposits of four seacoast states were turned over to these states, which in effect meant the transfer of these oil deposits to large-scale oil companies. Taxes on excess profits were removed.

In Korea, American troops suffered setbacks. The Korean Peoples' Army and the Chinese Peoples' Volunteers halted the attack of the troops of the USA and other countries who were participating in the Korean War, and inflicted a large loss on them. World public opinion demanded the end of the war in Korea.

In July, 1953, the USA began to conclude a truce in Korea. However, in October, 1953, the USA signed a so-called "mutual defense" pact with South Korea providing for the maintenance of American armed forces in South Korean territory. Despite the cessation of war activities, the state of emergency in the USA instituted by Truman's administration was not rescinded.



"Massacre in Korea" (1951) by leftist painter Pablo Picasso depicts the [Sinchon Massacre](#) by the United States and criticizes the war in Korea

In February, 1953, thirteen prominent figures in the Communist Party were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. In August, 1954, the so-called 1954 Act for control over Communist activities, passed by Congress and known also as the Humphrey-Butler or the Brownell-Butler Act, was signed by the President. This law was aimed at the virtual prohibition of Communist Party activities and against trade unions as well. The Progressive Party and many other progressive organizations, numbering over 250 in all, were included in the list of "subversives."

Instances of violence against Negroes took place. A protest movement spread in connection with the murder of a Negro boy, Emmett Till, by racists in the state of Mississippi and the subsequent acquittal of his murderers, as well as in connection with other acts of violence in the country by racists. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which was widely supported by trade unions, placed this protest movement in the forefront. Many trade unions organized meetings in which a demand was made for the stopping of racial discrimination and repressions against Negroes. The Republican Party suffered a defeat in the Congressional elections which occurred in November, 1954. As a result of the elections, the Democratic Party won a majority, although a small one, of seats.

In the middle of 1953 a decline in production began, continuing until the fall of 1954. The index of industrial production from July of 1953 to March-April of 1954 fell 10 per cent. By the end of 1954, even according to official figures, the number of totally unemployed was 3,230,000 persons. At the end of 1954 some rise in production began, products for war uses constituting 25 per cent of the total gross output of American industry.

The strike movement after the Second World War is characterized by the following figures: 43,700 strikes occurred in all in the period from 1946 to 1954, with a participation of 27,300,000 persons, as compared with 20,000 strikes involving 9,000,000 participants in the period from 1930 to 1939. In 1953, according to more precise figures, 5,091 strikes took place with participants numbering 2,400,000 persons. According to

incomplete official figures, in 1954 there were 3,468 strikes, in which 1,530,000 persons took part. At the time of the strike of electricians and radio technicians in Detroit in 1954, police used clubs and tear gas. In 1955 strikes occurred in the automobile, steel, mining, and other branches of industry. Workers of General Motors Corporation, the Chrysler Corporation, the Ford Motor Company, United States Steel Corporation, and others were on strike. In 1955, according to preliminary figures, 4,200 strikes took place in all, in which 2,750,000 persons participated. In 1955 in the USA there were, according to official figures, nearly 3,000,000 totally unemployed and more than 9,000,000 partially unemployed.¹⁸³

At the convention in December, 1955, a united trade-union organization was formed, combining the AFL and CIO and taking the name of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations. The leadership of this organization remained in the hands of the right-wing trade-union leaders.

In January and February of 1954, in Berlin there was a Four-Power Conference of Foreign Ministers, called together on the initiative of the Soviet Union. The USA declined the USSR proposal for the solution of the German question in a democratic spirit, and protested against the proposal of the USSR for the creation of a European system of collective security. Together with this, an agreement was reached at the Berlin Conference for a meeting of the Foreign Ministers at Geneva with the Foreign Ministers of all the five powers participating the USSR, the USA, France, Great Britain, and the Chinese Peoples' Republic. At the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers, the problem of restoring peace in Indochina was successfully resolved. However, because of the positions of some delegations, especially the USA delegation, no agreement was reached on a final peace settlement in Korea. The Geneva Conference did play a favorable role in promoting the easing of international tension.

However, soon after the end of the Geneva Conference in 1954, a Manila Conference was called in September, 1954, at the initiative of the USA, as well as of England and France. At this conference the "South East Asia Treaty Organization" was signed, the so-called SEATO, setting up the formation of an aggressive military bloc in the area of Southeast Asia. In December, 1954, the USA concluded a "mutual security" pact with the Chiang Kai-shek faction, and in accordance with its conditions virtual occupation of the Chinese islands of Taiwan and the Pescadores by the United States is extended for an indefinite period. In January, 1955, the Congress of the USA gave the President the right, in the case of armed conflict in the Strait of Taiwan zone, to use USA armed forces against the Chinese Peoples' Republic.



Unnamed Soviet propaganda poster saying "strengthen the union of the sickle and hammer!"

Reactionary circles in the USA, with the aid of hired soldiers, organized armed intervention in June of 1954 in Guatemala, whose government was beginning to put into practice an agrarian reform and had begun to follow an independent policy. As a result of the intervention, the rightful government of Guatemala was overthrown. The expansion of USA monopolies met the growing resistance of the popular masses as well as of the dissatisfied circles of the national bourgeoisie of Latin American countries. In Latin American countries, especially, the struggle for the nationalization of natural resources being plundered by North American monopolies, grew stronger. At the Caracas Pan-American Conference, which took place in 1954,

¹⁸³ In 1955, many of those thousands of strikes were likely wildcat strikes, the year that the AFL and CIO joined together as one. The number of strikes, numbers confirmed by a search on Google Books, showed that the labor movement had a good amount of strength unlike previous years. However, the amount of unemployment, partial and full, showed that the working class was suffering in the wee years of the "Golden Age of Capitalism" (1945-early 1970s).

resolutions were passed despite the opposition of the USA for agrarian and other reforms especially directed against the economic expansion of the USA in Latin America.

In October, 1954, the USA together with England succeeded in concluding in Paris military agreements, of which the main object was the acceleration of the revival of German militarism and the inclusion of the Federal German Republic in the military bloc of the Western powers. In October, 1954, a friendship, trade, and navigation agreement was signed between the USA and the Federal Republic. The Federal Republic became a part of the West European Union and was accepted as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In December, 1954, the Council of the North Atlantic bloc passed a resolution for preparation for an atomic war.

The "Cold War" and armaments race provoked the increasing resistance by peoples of the entire world. An attempt to ease the tension in international relations gained strength in wide circles of the American people. In the beginning of 1955 an appeal was made to the government on the part of church organizations, pacifist



Crowd welcomes Soviet agricultural delegates in Des Moines, Iowa in 1955 (from original encyclopedia).

groups, trade union, farmer, and youth organizations, student organizations, Negro, women's and other organizations, as well as from individual Americans, urging it to negotiate with the USSR. Some representatives of business and political circles in the USA also spoke in favor of the idea of talks. In May, 1955, the president of an American company, the National Steel Corporation, E. Weir, announced that "if the threat of war is eliminated, the hostility between Russia and the USA could turn into peaceful competition between two completely different political and social systems."¹⁸⁴ In July, 1955, a group of twenty-nine members of the House of Representatives belonging to the Democratic Party spoke out in favor of talks among the big powers. In a similar letter at the same time, ten members of the House of Representatives belonging to the Republican

Party appealed to President Eisenhower. Under the conditions of strengthening the peace movement in all countries, including the USA, the United States took part in a number of international actions which promoted the easing of international tension.¹⁸⁵

In May, 1955, after the basis was laid as a result of the talks between the government delegations of the USSR and Austria for the solution of the Austrian question, the USA and other powers signed an official agreement for the revival of an independent and democratic Austria.

The government delegation of the USA, headed by President Eisenhower, participated in a meeting of the Heads of State of four powers-the USSR, the USA, England, and France-in Geneva in July, 1955. The meeting, the Geneva Conference, had a positive significance in easing tensions in international relations. The American public regarded the USA visit of a Soviet delegation in 1955 and the journey of an American delegation to the USSR with approval. The "Spirit of Geneva" and the attempt at further lessening of international tensions received the support of wide sections of the American people. The convention of

¹⁸⁴ Quoted from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, May 25, 1955.

¹⁸⁵ This is definitely possible, but if Wittner's book on the peace movement, *Rebels Against War*, is to be believed, the movement was pretty weak from 1950-1956, fraught by the anti-communist political climate in the United States.

independent united trade unions of electrical and radio workers, the annual convention of AFL trade unions of Illinois, the convention of AFL trade unions of California, of the garment industry trade unions of the AFL, the Electrical Workers of the CIO, and others taking place after the Geneva Conference, spoke up in favor of talks between the governments to end the "Cold War." The National Union of Farmers, the executive committee of the CIO, the National Council of the Churches, and other organizations came forward to support the talks. Together with this, influential circles of the USA continued a policy against international cooperation.

The drawing of countries of the Near and Middle East into military alliances organized under the control of England and the USA and, particularly in the Baghdad Pact, directed against the Soviet Union and other peace-loving governments, continued even after the Geneva Conference of Heads of State of the Four Powers. At the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Four Powers which took place from October 27 to November 16, 1955, the USA, England, and France held a position which hindered the attainment of an agreement on a number of the most important international problems. However, the conference helped to attract the attention of wide circles to the most urgent international problems and helped to make clearer both the difficulties and the possibilities which there are in the successful resolution of international questions.

Now, after the conference, several influential circles in the USA are seeking as before to follow a policy "from a position of strength" to continue the "Cold War." At the same time, a number of well-known figures in the USA are speaking out for peaceful co-operation between the East and the West. Thus, in February, 1956, nearly 100 prominent American scientists, churchmen, political, and trade-union figures appealed to members of the USA Congress "to accept the challenge of peaceful competition" and to remove the obstacles in the way of the development of trade and of delegation exchanges between capitalist and socialist countries.



A poster, of an unknown date, asking for peace between the Soviet Union and USA

Wide masses of the American people seeking—as are other peoples of other countries—a lasting peace and the easing of international tension are more and more actively supporting peaceful coexistence of countries with differing socio-economic systems.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ This was written at a time when the Soviet government of Nikita Khrushchev, and like-minded individuals, were willing to engage in "peaceful competition" with the United States, and abandon the measures of Joseph Stalin which had secured the socialist state. His time in office would only last until 1964 when he was removed from power due to the embarrassment of the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile Crisis and engaged in peaceful co-existence with the West. In 1964, Leonid Brezhnev took power, bringing back many of the policies of Stalin's time, holding the Soviet Union in place until 1984, when Mikhail Gorbachev took power and cozied up even more to the Western capitalists than Khrushchev, engaging in policies than arguably led the Soviet Union to its collapse in 1991 ultimately.